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Sepphoris Synagogue: Deciphering an Ancient Message through Its Archaeological and Socio-Historical Contexts (2005) and "Jewish Galilee in the First Century C.E.: An Archaeological View," in D. R. Schwartz, *Flavius Josephus, Vita: Introduction, Hebrew Translation, and Commentary* (2008) 15–60.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY: AN INTRODUCTION

David M. Gwynn and Susanne Bangert

The place of religion in the world of Late Antiquity, no less than in our modern world, has been the subject of great debate in recent years. Late Antiquity was a period of diversity and change. The 3rd to the 7th c. A.D. witnessed the transformation of the classical Mediterranean, the emergence of a Christian Roman Empire, the collapse of Roman imperial power in the west, and the rise of new and evolving social, political and religious concepts and structures. Archaeology has been at the forefront of many recent advances in our knowledge of this complex age of transition. In this volume recent research by archaeologists and religious and literary historians is drawn together in an inter-disciplinary approach that sheds new light on the remarkable religious diversity of Late Antiquity and its significance for our understanding of this period and of the place of religion in the evolution of the ancient and medieval worlds.

Late antique religion embraced a vast spectrum of faiths, cults and practices. Graeco-Roman pagans, Christians, Jews, Samaritans, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, and more co-existed and both helped to shape and were shaped by these centuries of change. In this age of religious interaction and conflict, identity and self-definition attained a new importance and religions underwent a process of codification and canonisation, a process perhaps best attested by, but by no means limited to, the Christian Church and rabbinic Judaism. Yet this very emphasis upon definition itself created ever-increasing diversity, both between religions and also within religions, for no single interpretation would ever receive universal acceptance from all those who claimed to belong to a given faith or cult. 'Orthodoxy' and 'heresy' are above all Christian concepts, but divisions existed within all late antique religions, while the same diversity characterised religious practices common to all, including pilgrimage, asceticism and magic. Only through the integration of archaeological and textual sources can that diversity be fully revealed and explored. A comprehensive survey of late antique religion is beyond the scope of this book, and the nature of

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Late Roman paganism will be the focus of the companion volume *Late Antique Archaeology 7: The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*, while for further research the reader is also directed to the bibliographic essay that follows this introduction. The articles presented here instead offer a demonstration of what can be achieved through the exploitation of material and literary evidence in concert to reveal the religious diversity of this fundamental period in history, diversity which must in turn be set within the wider social, economic and political world of Late Antiquity.

Archaeology and Religion

The relationship between archaeology and the study of religion has not always been smooth. Archaeologists have at times placed religion and religious belief on the fringes of their research, preferring to focus on economic and social structures, production and settlement. Religious scholars have on occasion been equally guilty of ignoring or underestimating the significance of material evidence in comparison to texts which inevitably suffer from their own biases and limitations. Such judgements are of course easy to generalise, and archaeology and religion have always existed in close proximity. In certain fields the role of archaeology has long been recognised as fundamental, including the quest for biblical history and the origins of Christianity and Judaism, and the excavation and study of great sites and monuments of all religions and denominations. However, the methodological problems raised by the archaeology of religion have still not received sufficient analysis, particularly within the field of late antique scholarship. If we are to bring archaeology and religious studies fully into the scholarly mainstream where they belong, then ongoing cooperation between academics of different backgrounds is essential. This is reflected in the articles in this volume, and further consideration must be given to how archaeological and literary evidence may best work together to illuminate religious belief and practice in a world as diverse as Late Antiquity.

The need to integrate the varied and at times conflicting evidence of material culture and texts is obviously not restricted to the archaeology of religion. Yet the unique pressures that impact upon the study of religion raise this problem in a particularly acute form and no simple answer will suffice. To speak of the 'superiority' or 'priority' of one

form of evidence over another rests on common but often misguided assumptions, and the strengths and weaknesses of different types of evidence must always be held in mind and applied to the specific context and subject under discussion. This may appear to be (and is) stating the obvious, but such elementary principles are all too easily ignored or forgotten. It does not seem out of place in the introduction to this volume to provide a brief overview of those respective strengths and weaknesses and their significance for the study of religious diversity.

In the western world, the privileged form of evidence for the history of religion has traditionally been the text. This is in part a reflection of the Judaeo-Christian background of most western scholarly traditions, a background which rests on the authority of Scripture and the written word and within which some denominations at least have questioned the role of religious art and monumental architecture. Christianity in particular also privileges religious belief over precise ritual and it is our literary sources that provide our greatest insight into personal belief in earlier periods of history. It is thus not difficult to understand why archaeology has at times been marginalised by religious historians for whom what an individual believed takes precedence over the physical setting in which that individual lived and worshipped. In this tradition the role of archaeology is to provide material to support our authoritative texts, and the interpretation of that material is approached through the lens of the textual sources.

This dependence upon literary evidence for the interpretation of archaeology inevitably raises certain problems for the study of religion as for other fields of history. Literary sources of course have their own marked limitations, and while these limitations are widely recognised their implications are not always fully appreciated. At a very basic level, texts normally reveal the attitudes and beliefs only of those who are literate, which in Late Antiquity is not a large proportion of society. They are also open to the biases of individual authors, who often wrote in times of controversy and in highly polemical terms. Most significantly for our present purposes, however, the religious writings that survive primarily represent the voices of those whose authority was upheld by what would become established as the accepted tradition within a given religion. The process of definition and codification that characterised both Christianity and Judaism in Late Antiquity also sought to exclude those who fell outside the lines that were being drawn. Whether through the deliberate destruction of their works, or through the more passive neglect of writings not selected to be

preserved and copied for later generations, little now survives in our literary record from those denounced as Christian 'heretics' or from Jewish groups whose practices differed from rabbinic principles. The loss of so much evidence significantly exaggerates the uniformity and dominance of Christian orthodoxy and rabbinic Judaism in the late antique world in which those traditions only gradually emerged, and so in turn distorts our understanding of that world when viewed through the selective texts that now survive.

The strengths and weaknesses of archaeology for a historian of religion are no less marked but are in many respects very different, and so the need for cooperation becomes self-evident. Whereas religious texts are individual and tied to contexts and controversies that can usually be identified, archaeological evidence extends far more widely socially, geographically and chronologically. It is true that archaeology is in general inadequate to reveal personal religious belief, and is severely limited in its application to specific religious debates and controversies (see for example the articles of Gwynn and Ward-Perkins in this volume on the archaeology of the 'Arian' heresy). Yet archaeology reveals a broader vision of society than does the literary evidence, and as has been rightly emphasised in recent years the older prioritisation of religious belief over physical setting rests on a serious misconception. The physical environment in which religion takes place is never merely a reflection of belief or practice, but itself directly impacts upon beliefs and practices and how they are understood and expressed. The study of architecture, artefacts and topography and their role in the development of Jewish and Christian liturgy in Late Antiquity has borne this out. Here as elsewhere, the physical and textual evidence must be approached in dialogue, without pre-assumed priority of one category over the other.

Archaeology also retains the capacity to surprise. New excavations and surveys continue across the late antique world, and new discoveries are constantly adding to our knowledge and forcing us to revise previous theories. The discovery of the decorated church and synagogue of Dura Europus on the Euphrates in the 1920s and 1930s rewrote the history of Jewish and Christian art and architecture, and in more recent years no less remarkable finds both inside and beyond the frontiers of the Later Roman Empire have transformed our awareness of a number of religious groups marginalised in our literary record. The important sect of the Samaritans has received increasing attention from archaeologists in Israel (for a survey of current research see

the article of Dar). The Church of the East (once wrongly known as the 'Nestorian' Church) has been traced as far as China, as have the Manichaeans whose settlements in Central Asia lasted into medieval times. These recent discoveries have also revealed new textual sources, both epigraphic and literary, and underline again the need for scholarly approaches to continue to evolve to integrate the new evidence and not become bound by assumptions and models that cannot adapt to our ever-changing understanding of the past.

Above all in the context of this volume, archaeological evidence, through its breadth and through its very independence from the traditions that dominate our literary sources, reveals the true diversity of religion in Late Antiquity. Of course, this is not to suggest that archaeology too has not been coloured by those dominant traditions, which have influenced both the sites selected for excavation and survey and the interpretation of the data recovered from those sites. The emphasis upon Christianity and on church and monastic sites in much western archaeology reflects this bias, as does the history of Jewish archaeology in Israel. Nevertheless, archaeologists have increasingly recognised the limitations of such approaches and the need to set religious material culture within its wider historical and social context. The breadth of archaeological material now coming to light must be viewed not through the lens of our texts but as an essential primary source in its own right, which through comparison and contrast to the literary evidence opens new directions for research and a new appreciation for the complexity of the late antique world.

Diversity, Identity and 'Orthodoxy'

Archaeological discovery and the ongoing reassessment of older literary and material evidence continue to reinforce the diversity of late antique religion. Graeco-Roman paganism was always by nature diverse, for paganism as a religious 'system' is primarily a Christian construct, uniting all the widely varied classical cults and practices which Christianity rejected within a single polemical collective. The Roman state cults came under increasing pressure from Christian emperors following the conversion of Constantine (306–37), but at a local and rural level paganism continued in many different forms for centuries (see further the articles presented in *Late Antique Archaeology 7*). Judaism and Christianity both imposed a stronger sense of religious

identity upon their adherents, not least through their efforts to separate themselves from the surrounding pagan environment, although pagan practices and material culture nevertheless exerted a strong influence on them. Yet here too diversity is never hard to find. Ancient Judaism incorporated a variety of sects and teachings, including the Pharisees and Sadducees of the time of Christ, while further differences inevitably emerged between the Jews in Israel and the Jews of the wider Diaspora. Christian divisions similarly existed from the very origins of the Christ movement, and local and regional differences played a major role in Christian controversies from the second century rift between Rome and Asia Minor over the date of Easter to the great theological debates of the 4th and 5th c., which ultimately saw many of the Christians of Syria and Egypt separate from those of Constantinople and Rome. Even smaller religious followings such as the Manichaeans likewise exhibit such differences, perhaps unsurprising in a sect that extended from Roman North Africa to the Chinese Empire.

For the historian of Late Antiquity, terms such as paganism, Judaism and Christianity must therefore be used with a certain degree of care. Individual pagans, Jews and Christians could hold widely varying interpretations of their proclaimed religion, and collective labels can easily conceal these deep differences. The same diversity can also be traced in a variety of practices common to all late antique religions, practices which invariably had roots in earlier times but whose prominence and significance increased dramatically in this period. Asceticism, so often studied in a Christian context, also exerted a strong influence on pagans, Jews and Manichaeans and took many forms, from the urban philosopher or desert hermit to collective monasticism (for the extreme example of the Christian stylite or pillar-saint see the article by Schachner). The cult of the holy man is another late antique phenomenon traditionally associated with Christianity whose diversity across and within different religions has increasingly been recognised. The same holds true for pilgrimage, which also had pagan and Jewish roots but which gained far greater significance with the rise of Christianity from the 4th c. onwards, and yet varied widely by region and by location, as Bangert demonstrates elsewhere in this volume. Alongside these practices, all of which gained a degree of acceptance within Jewish and Christian tradition, other customs continued which again extended across religious divisions in different forms but which were condemned by many authorities as 'magic' rather than correct religion. The separation of magic and religion is far from being as

straightforward as our official sources would like to imply, and magic held an important place in late antique hearts and minds, as is discussed further here in the articles of Karivieri and Sfameni.

The existence of such diversity of religious belief and practice was a source of potential tension for those religions which upheld unity and uniformity as their ideal. This was not the case for the majority of pagans, although some did seek an over-arching structure for their many cults and deities, an aim visible in the unsuccessful religious reforms of Julian 'the Apostate', the last pagan Roman emperor (361–63). The challenge facing Jews and Christians, however, was more urgent, and Late Antiquity was to prove a period of fundamental importance to the identity and self-definition of both religions. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in A.D. 70 and the defeat of the Bar-Kochba revolt in A.D. 135 forced Judaism to redefine itself, a need made ever-greater by the rise of Christianity. This set the background for the emergence of rabbinic Judaism, as the teachings of the rabbis gradually became recognised as the authoritative voice of Jewish religion. Like the Jews, Christians too had always possessed a sense of collective identity, but with the conversion of Constantine and the growing relationship between the imperial state and the Church from the 4th c. onwards that identity became a matter of still greater importance. The Christian Empire offered imperial patronage to those who accepted the approved orthodoxy in belief and practice and the threat of persecution (albeit with limited practical effect) to those who did not, together with the structures required to define that orthodoxy at an empire-wide level through the ecumenical council (of which the first met at Nicaea under Constantine in 325) and imperial law. It was a shift that was to have major consequences, both positive and negative, for the history of Christianity and Christendom.

The construction and expression of religious identity was thus a characteristic feature of the late antique period and is visible in every area of religious life. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures were codified and their meaning expounded through rabbinic exegesis and Christian creeds and doctrinal debates. The status of those who had the right to interpret Scripture and conduct worship was more clearly marked, although tensions continued to exist as between the authority of the clergy and the charismatic influence of monks or holy men. The Christian basilica and the Jewish synagogue took on recognised forms and the liturgical ceremonies within those buildings and in wider urban and rural contexts were more structured and formulaic.

Yet even within imperial Christianity this process of religious definition could never universally be achieved, and the biases of our sources greatly exaggerate the uniformity of both rabbinic Judaism and the Christian Church in Late Antiquity. As we have already seen, this is an area in which archaeology must play a crucial role, highlighting the diversity that texts can so easily conceal.

In older scholarship, late antique Judaism is often defined purely as rabbinic Judaism, for it is this conception of Judaism which almost entirely dominates the surviving literary sources, most notably the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds. Yet such an approach requires one to assume that the diversity that characterised Judaism into the first century A.D. ceased after A.D. 70, and this assumption has been rightly challenged. Not all late antique Jews were rabbinic Jews, and it is by no means clear to what extent the rabbis sought to impose their own view of Judaism as the only correct path, or what authority they held. By the end of the 8th c. the rabbinic movement was genuinely dominant in Jewish society, but in Late Antiquity itself the rabbis were only one among a number of possible Jewish power groups. Archaeology has proved essential in overturning the older scholarly consensus (see for example the contribution of Magness in this volume) and in examining the interaction of Jews with the culture of their pagan and Christian neighbours (as Weiss demonstrates here for the Jews of Sepphoris). The material evidence of buildings, tombs, artefacts and inscriptions offers scholars a broader vision of Jewish society than our rabbinic texts can allow.

The history of Christianity in Late Antiquity has long been structured around the great councils and fathers of the Church. Their creeds and teachings comprise the 'Patristic' tradition of Christian orthodoxy, a tradition passed on in an unbroken line from Christ and the apostles to future generations. Those whose doctrines or practices came to be excluded from that tradition were condemned as heretics or schismatics (for a further discussion of this 'heresiological ethos', see the article of Perrin). Yet the dividing line between 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in Christian history was never as rigid nor as self-evident as the textual evidence, written almost invariably from the perspective of the eventual victors, would like to suggest. During the great doctrinal controversies in the 4th and 5th c. over the Persons of the Trinity and the nature of Christ it was by no means apparent which positions would come to be accepted as 'orthodox'. We cannot thus approach these periods in the black-and-white terms favoured by our

literary sources, which denounce (often with hindsight) all those whose teachings would fall outside later orthodoxy under collective polemical labels such as 'Arian' or 'Nestorian'. Rather, we must recognise the broad spectrums of Christian belief and worship that existed during such controversies, and avoid the imposition of polarised models of interpretation that cannot do justice to the complexity of the debates or the issues at stake.

It is against this background that over recent decades scholars have begun to reassess the controversies of the 4th and 5th c. and to reconsider traditional interpretations of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' as they are applied to those debates. Archaeology has the potential to make a significant contribution to this ongoing process of re-evaluation, but this potential as yet has not been fully exploited. Many archaeologists unfortunately continue to rely on older theological scholarship which accepted the polemical assertions of our sources too much at face value, and so seek material evidence for the clear separation of 'orthodox' and 'heretical' churches and congregations which those sources construct. The identification of such sites is on occasion possible and can be valuable, but the criteria used are often inadequate and derive more from the biased textual evidence than from the evidence on the ground. This is particularly true for much of the archaeology of the 'Arian' controversy, for which see again the articles of Gwynn and Ward-Perkins. The so-called 'Nestorian' controversy that provoked the third ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431 and the division between Chalcedonians and 'Monophysites' (or more accurately 'Miaphysites') after the fourth ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 pose a further challenge, for these debates led to the creation of distinct churches which have remained separate in communion and organisation down to the present day. Recent research has done much to illuminate the history of the Church of the East (often still inaccurately described as the 'Nestorian' Church) in Persia and China and of the Miaphysite churches of Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria and Armenia in regions that after the Islamic Conquests would fall outside the borders of the Byzantine Empire. But there remains a need for archaeologists and theologians to work more closely together to integrate their methodological approaches and to draw out the archaeological evidence which potentially offers a crucial glimpse of the diverse reality that lies behind the black-and-white vision of our texts.

The ongoing formation of Jewish and Christian identity that continued throughout Late Antiquity was to have vast implications for

the future history of those religions and of the European and Near Eastern world. The construction and imposition of a more defined and restrictive sense of religious identity came at a considerable cost. Pagans, Jews and Manicheans as well as numerous heretics and schismatics were to suffer under the vain efforts of Christian emperors to achieve true religious unity, while the narrowing of acceptable parameters placed new restrictions on the breadth of beliefs and practices that had characterised Judaism and Christianity in earlier times. In the modern world we feel keenly this loss of freedom, and the appearance of this volume is itself testimony to the diversity that refused to be bound by the limits of 'approved' religion, as well as a reflection of a contemporary emphasis upon religious pluralism. Yet neither Jewish nor Christian tradition ever sought to deny all difference or rights of expression, and the strength of the collective identities which emerged in Late Antiquity played a crucial role in the survival of both religions in the traumatic years of the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West and the rise of Islam.

Religion in the Late Antique World

The importance of religion within the history of Late Antiquity is almost impossible to exaggerate, and the diversity of late antique religion is itself a reflection of the diversity of the wider late antique world. Yet while few would contest the significance of religion to our understanding of Late Antiquity, it is a cause for concern that, at a time when the distinctions between traditional scholarly disciplines are increasingly being broken down, the study of religion remains to a large degree apart from the mainstream of historical scholarship. The separation of history and religion is a contemporary phenomenon which corresponds to the status of religion in much of the modern West, where religion no longer exerts a major influence on the daily life of the majority of the population. No one would suggest that such a model could be imposed upon Late Antiquity, for the modern separation of 'sacred' and 'secular' has no place in this world (as is discussed at the level of literary culture by Lepelley, Humphries and Gwynn, and Jeffreys in this volume). But the intellectual isolation of religion and history in many western universities does nevertheless have a direct and often negative impact on how we approach this earlier period. Major

advances have been made in patristic and Jewish studies in particular in recent decades that have only gradually filtered into the wider scholarly consciousness. Late antique history and archaeology likewise have much to teach students of religion who still on occasion approach Christian theology and Jewish exegesis without sufficient awareness of the significance of historical context. Yet opportunities for dialogue remain limited, and more collaborative projects are needed (like the conference that inspired this volume) to draw these important scholarly fields of research into closer cooperation.

So why is religion so fundamental to the study of Late Antiquity? At a very basic level, religion exerts a colossal influence upon the evidence on which we depend for our knowledge of the past. Religious writings dominate our textual record, often preserved in religious institutions which had few motives for gathering material from divergent traditions, and religious buildings have survived and remained in use when other structures have disappeared without trace. Even for historians with no direct interest in religious affairs, some knowledge is thus essential. Only if we are aware of the controversial status and role of the rabbis within late antique Judaism can the priceless material contained within rabbinic exegesis and teachings be fully exploited. And some grasp of the major controversies of early Christianity is a requirement for any student of Late Antiquity. Scripture and theology underlie the social and political activity of the Church and of the hugely influential ascetic movement, and divisions over correct belief and practice impact upon all forms of Christian writing, from sermons and letters to historiography and hagiography.

At a slightly deeper level, although no less straightforward, religion is also fundamental to our knowledge of the late antique world because late antique religion is of course itself a product of that world. Whatever their ultimate source of inspiration, religions like all human movements that exist within human time must inevitably influence and be influenced by the environment in which they exist. Religious leaders in Late Antiquity were also social and political leaders, and their social and political functions in turn impacted upon their religious status. Temples, churches and synagogues were not solely religious structures, and the rise of the Christian church over the pagan temple played a major role in the ongoing transformation of late antique urban and rural life. Religion indeed penetrates every aspect of late antique life, and like social, economic and political history, religious history must

be placed within this wider background. Here again archaeology has a crucial role to play, offering insights into material culture and popular piety at social levels which our literary sources usually ignore.

'Popular religion' has always been a difficult concept to study. Partly this reflects the nature of our literary evidence, which inevitably derives primarily from the upper levels of society and which within Christianity and Judaism at least is often composed by those who held positions as clergy or teachers rather than by their congregations and students (see Sandwell's article here on the preaching of John Chrysostom). Yet the idea of 'popular religion' itself implies a visible distinction between 'official' or 'elite' religion and the 'popular' religion of the masses, a distinction that was by no means always apparent in Late Antiquity. Pilgrimage, belief in magic and the cult of the saints and veneration of relics have all been described as in some sense 'popular', but such practices were common across every social class and among priests and laity alike. Even the Christian doctrinal debates of the 4th and 5th c., which often seem so trivial to modern western audiences, involved far more than just the theologians and bishops who compose our literary sources. The sheer intensity of conflict and interaction within and between the many different faiths of Late Antiquity underlines once again the importance of religion in this period of history and the need for scholars to continue to draw together the literary and archaeological work, to which this volume is a contribution, if we are to engage with the true diversity of the late antique religious world.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

David M. Gwynn

The last few decades have seen an ever-increasing flow of scholarly works dedicated to the study of Late Antiquity. The spheres of archaeology and religion have been at the forefront of that scholarship, and for academics and students alike it has become more and more difficult to keep pace with new publications and shifting interpretations. This bibliographic essay cannot provide a comprehensive record of late antique archaeological and religious scholarship, for such an 'essay' would require a vast tome in its own right. The aims of this essay are more limited but it is hoped more practical and more accessible. The following pages offer a reference guide that highlights the diversity of the religious world of Late Antiquity both within and between different religions and across the broad spectrum of spiritual and physical experiences revealed through the study of asceticism, holy persons, relics, pilgrimage and magic. The bibliography provided is intended to aid both scholars desiring further knowledge and students seeking initial guidance on subjects of personal interest. Each section is prefaced by a brief introduction highlighting particular themes and debates and identifying important reading, and the general works at the beginning of each entry can be consulted for further bibliographic assistance.

The organisation of this essay follows closely the organisation of the volume as a whole. Several important subjects have therefore been omitted, in particular the ongoing presence and evolution of paganism in Late Antiquity and the impact of Christianisation, for, as has been explained in the introduction, these subjects will be covered in the companion volume *Late Antique Archaeology 7: The Archaeology of Late Antique 'Paganism'*. Christianity and Judaism, however, receive extensive attention, including literary and archaeological sources, regional surveys, 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy', and liturgy. Additional sections cover the Samaritans and the Manichees, two religious groups whose literature and archaeological remains have attracted significant expert analysis but which have only relatively recently begun to receive the attention they deserve from a wider scholarly audience. Asceticism

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and Monasticism receive their own section for reasons that are I hope self-evident, as too do Martyrs, Holy Men and Women; Relics and Icons; and Pilgrimage. The inclusion of Magic may at first sight seem out of place, yet as recent scholarship has demonstrated the modern separation between magic and religion cannot be imposed uncritically on the past and concepts of magical and divine forces, prophecy and theurgy were central to the late antique religious world. The final section covers the limited evidence for popular religion and piety and the engagement of the wider population in religious controversy.

In all these sections the bibliographic entries cover both literary and archaeological studies, although in keeping with the purpose of the *Late Antique Archaeology* series there is a particular emphasis on material evidence and its interpretation. The limits of space and the need for clarity have led me to keep details to a minimum, and I have also preferred to reference larger volumes which contain their own bibliographies rather than record every article published on a given theme, although important articles are regularly cited. The greater proportion of the books cited are in English, reflecting both my own background and to a degree the relative scale of book and journal publication in the United Kingdom and the United States. Nevertheless, works in all major continental languages have naturally been referenced, and the contrasting approaches of different scholarly and linguistic fields have played a crucial role in bringing the diversity of late antique religion to light. I am deeply grateful to all those who have assisted me in compiling this essay and who have given of their time to fill gaps in my own reading and to improve the quality and range of the entries that follow. The responsibility for any remaining errors or omissions is of course my own.

Introduction

The study of religion and religious history has never lacked attention, and the fundamental role of religion in the complex transitional period of Late Antiquity has always been recognised. Yet here, as in other spheres of late antique scholarship, recent decades have seen significant change. The traditional Western focus on Christianity remains highly influential but has been tempered by an increasing emphasis upon the value and importance of non-Christian religious studies, and there is far greater scholarly awareness of the vast diversity that exists

both between and within religions and religious experiences in the ancient and late antique worlds (perhaps best reflected in the works of J. Z. Smith (1978, 1990)). The nature of religious identity has been the focus of a number of recent studies (see for example the papers collected in Frakes and Digeser (2006)), and the problematic nature of concepts like 'orthodox' Christianity or 'rabbinic' Judaism is now widely accepted. As a number of the articles in this volume attest, this diversity can be traced throughout the religious environment of Late Antiquity, not only among Christians and Jews but among the Samaritans, the Manichees and other religious communities. Diversity is equally visible in modern studies of late antique asceticism, the 'holy man', pilgrimage and magic, all of which take different forms between and within the different religions covered in this essay.

In this evolving understanding of the late antique religious world, archaeology has played a central role (for a valuable introduction to the strengths and weaknesses of religious archaeology see the articles edited by Insoll (2001)). The material evidence of archaeology, not only through specific artefacts or architectural remains but through study of topography and the use of space for ceremony and liturgy, offers insights that texts omit and allows us to see the diversity that our often polemical and ideological literary sources may conceal. Yet it is equally true that there are many aspects of religious experience that archaeology cannot adequately reveal, and the study of religious belief in Late Antiquity will always require knowledge of texts. It is the relationship between the evidence of text and archaeology that still awaits closer and more refined analysis, and this must be achieved through discussion between historians, archaeologists, theologians and religious historians, not through polemical assertions of the superiority of different categories of evidence. Literary and material sources have their own strengths and weaknesses, and the greatest breakthroughs have been achieved by drawing their respective strengths together into a greater whole. This entire volume represents a call for this work to continue, for it is here that great possibilities lie for further advances in our understanding of the role of religion in the wider social and political history of Late Antiquity.

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Christianity

The Church in Late Antiquity

The history of Christianity has attracted scholars from the very beginning of the Christian movement itself, and the scale of writings is far too great for any degree of comprehensive coverage to be attempted here. There are numerous excellent introductions to the early Church, including the classic works of Chadwick (1993, 2001) and the edited volumes of Esler (2000) and of L. Pietri (2000) in *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*. A variety of valuable articles can similarly be found in the works edited by Hazlett (1991) and Kreider (2001), and particularly in the first volume of the new series *A People's History of Christianity*, edited by Horsley (2005), and in the *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, edited by Harvey and Hunter (2008). Also to be recommended is Rousseau's *The Early Christian Centuries* (2002), which contains further suggestions for bibliographic guidance. For the late antique and Byzantine periods there are again an array of fundamental studies, including Maraval (1997), Brenk (2003) and Brown (2003), and the edited volumes of C. Pietri (1995) and L. Pietri (1998) and of Burrus (2005) and Krueger (2006).

Given the enormous quantity of scholarship on Christian subjects and the equally intimidating number of primary texts upon which a scholar of Christianity is able to draw, the assistance of reference works and bibliographical aids has long been essential. Dictionaries, encyclopaedias, lexicons and prosopographies have all been compiled, providing a source of reference on all aspects of Christian history and thought. An ever-growing proportion of Christian writings have been edited, from the *Patrologia Latina* (1844–1864) and *Patrologia Graeca* (1857–1866) of Migne to the ongoing work of the *Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (1897–) and *Sources Chrétiennes* (1941–), all series which contain texts relevant not only to Christianity but to the religious and cultural world of Late Antiquity more broadly. Major series of translations are likewise accessible, most commonly into English but also into other languages, and such translations are increasingly becoming

available online. The appearance of anthologies and source collections has also greatly benefitted students in particular, with the *New Eusebius* and *Creeds, Councils and Controversies* of Stevenson (1987, 1989) perhaps the most valuable as an introduction to the breadth and diversity of early Christian writings.

Both the primary texts upon which the history of Christianity has traditionally been based and the scholarship that has exploited those texts are inevitably influenced by the context and biases of individual authors and by their conceptions of Christianity and of the Church. From the very first *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (*ca.* 260–*ca.* 339) each Christian generation has sought to reinterpret the Christian past to serve the needs of their own present, a process equally visible in the rival historical polemics of Catholics and Protestants after the Reformation and in the more irenic debates that have accompanied the modern ecumenical dialogues for Christian unity. In recent decades the older model of Late Antiquity as an age of Christian 'triumph' has come under increasing attack, although it still exerts its influence, and has been succeeded by a greater awareness of the complexity of Christianity (or Christianities) in the late antique period. The conversion of Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor, not only transformed the social and political status of Christianity but also led to a transformation in Christian material culture and Church organisation. Christian architecture and art, liturgical and ceremonial practice and concepts of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' all received greater definition with imperial patronage of the Church. Yet this process of definition was gradual and incomplete, and wide regional and local variations always remained.

Archaeology has played a crucial role both in refining our understanding of how Christianity developed in the late antique period and in highlighting the ongoing Christian diversity that our literary sources at times appear to conceal. The history of 'Christian archaeology' is long and controversial, and is well brought out in the studies of Bovini (1968), Deichmann (1983), Frend (1996) and Lane (2001), while the evolution of scholarly interests and ideas can also be traced through the many volumes of the *Atti del congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana*. As all these works demonstrate, archaeology has radically advanced our knowledge of Christian architecture and art, topography, epigraphy, liturgy and ceremonial, and in recent decades has expanded beyond the traditional horizons of the Later Roman empire into more distant areas, with considerable effect (see regional surveys below). Yet

Christian archaeology, no less than textual scholarship, is open to the influence of personal and denominational bias, and the interaction of archaeologists and literary theologians and liturgical scholars has previously suffered from disinterest from both sides to the detriment of the subject as a whole. Such interaction is now increasing and with it the value of Christian archaeology as a discipline, as will be seen from the sections that follow.

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Architecture and Art

The architecture and art of the Christian Church offers a priceless resource for our understanding of the early Christians and the world in which they lived, yet has also been the focus for considerable con-

troversy both in modern times and in previous centuries. The legitimacy of Christian art in light of the Second Commandment and fears of idolatry came under attack particularly during the Byzantine Iconoclasm and the Reformation, while the latter also challenged the appropriateness of monumental ornamented churches which might detract from pure devotion to God. These controversies caused the destruction of a number of now lost churches and works of art, notably in Byzantium, and led to the imposition of later standards upon earlier Christian generations, with recurring assertions in the Protestant West of a puritan and aniconic early Church. It is essential to set aside such later preconceptions if we are to examine the extant evidence in its own context and to better assess the relationship of early Christian architecture and art with contemporary classical models and the transformation of Christian material culture from the reign of Constantine onwards.

Studies of early Christian architecture have focused heavily on the development and evolution of churches, although increasing attention is now being paid to the wider architectural environment within which Christianity evolved (the standard work remains that of Krautheimer (1986), to which should be added the books of White (1990, 1996–97), with further bibliography available from Kleinbauer (1992)). Little trace remains of the buildings in which the first Christians may have gathered, whether Jewish synagogues or converted house churches, which cannot easily be identified in the archaeological record. Only gradually did purpose-built churches emerge and only in the 4th c. did certain forms become increasingly standardised, particularly the basilica which would become the most common church design in the West from Constantine onwards (see Ward-Perkins (1954), Krautheimer (1967)), the tetraconch churches in Syria and elsewhere (Kleinbauer (1972, 1987)), and the domed churches of which the most famous is Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. Even within the Christian empire, however, this process of standardisation was never complete and late antique church planning continued to experiment and to advance by trial and error (Krautheimer (1980)), another reflection of the diversity of late antique Christianity. On all these subjects, see further the regional surveys in the following section of this essay.

The study of early Christian art shares many of the limitations of the architectural evidence and has aroused far greater controversy. The impact of Byzantine and particularly Protestant Iconoclasm on Western scholarship and the fragmentary survival of evidence for

Christian iconography before Constantine led a number of scholars to see the emergence of Christian art as a product of the Christian empire rather than the original Church. The only notable exceptions were the catacombs of Rome and the 3rd c. church discovered at Dura Europus on the Euphrates, on which again see the regional surveys below. Yet the argument that the early Church was originally aniconic rests on very weak foundations, as Sister Charles Murray demonstrated in a famous article in 1977. The older classics of Strzygowski (1901), Volbach and Hirmer (1958), Klauser (1958, 1959) and Grabar (1966, 1968) have now largely been superseded by the works of Elsner (1995, 1998) and Jensen (2000). Nevertheless, the attitudes of early Christians towards iconography still divide scholarly opinion (compare for example Finney (1994), Bigham (2004) and Cameron (2005), and see the bibliography on icons and iconoclasm later in this essay) and impact upon modern interpretations of the Church in the period before Constantine.

The emergence of Christian art on a large scale in the 4th c. also raises further questions regarding the concept of Christian art itself and the impact upon that art of Jewish and classical traditions. The influence of Jewish art has been traced by Brenk (1977), Gutmann (1984), and Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) among others, the latter work focusing on the rare instance of an early synagogue and church with preserved decoration in close proximity at Dura Europus. The relationship of Christian and classical art has received more widespread attention, as in the works of Elsner (1995, 1998), Mathews (1999) and numerous studies too extensive to list. Scholars have looked beyond church art to assess other early Christian artistic forms, including the development of Christian mosaics, sarcophagi and ivory carving. In all these media, the ongoing interaction of classical, Jewish and Christian iconography and symbolism can hinder the precise identification of artefacts or their owners, as can be seen in the work of Daniélou (1961) and the edited volume of Ries (1985). Here once more the divisions between religions and their means of material expression are never as clear or as fixed as we might assume.

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Regional and Urban Surveys

The early years of Christian archaeology saw an understandable focus upon certain cities and regions of fundamental importance to the history of the Church. The churches and catacombs of Rome, the great patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople, and the material remains of Jerusalem and the Holy Land all received detailed attention. Regional studies also flourished in North Africa, northern Italy, Asia Minor and Egypt, and in Britain and Gaul. In more recent decades, while work in all these areas has continued, archaeologists have spread their net further and regions that had previously been neglected have begun to receive the attention they deserve, including Arabia, Mesopotamia, Armenia and Georgia, and the Balkans. The following entries once again cannot be comprehensive, but provide an introduction to work in the different regions. Further reading can be drawn from the general works referred to in previous sections and from the bibliographic essays of earlier volumes in the *Late Antique Archaeology* series. For all these cities and regions one should also consult the numerous volumes of the *Atti del congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana*. A more specific focus upon Christianisation in these regions can be found in the bibliographic essay in the companion volume *Late Antique Archaeology 7*.

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Christian Liturgy

Recent studies of the liturgical and ceremonial structure of the Church, both in terms of the order of the service and the organisation of the major Christian festivals and the Christian year, reveal a further field in which archaeology has had a major impact upon traditional literary Christian scholarship. There are a number of solid introductions to the history of Christian worship, from older classics such as Dix (1945) and Jungmann (1959) to the works of Wegman (1985) and Bradshaw (1996) and the articles collected in C. Jones *et al.* (edd.), *The Study of Liturgy* (1992). The essential textual evidence is accessible in a wide variety of source collections, with a particular focus on texts concerning the eucharist (Jasper and Cuming (1987)) and baptism (Whitaker (1970), Finn (1992a, 1992b), Yarnold (1994)).

The earliest Christian liturgies drew upon Jewish models (Jewish liturgy is discussed elsewhere in this essay), and developed along different lines in different regions of the East (Baldovin (1989), Schulz (1980), Taft (1992)) and West (Klauser (1965), Willis (1994)). In Late Antiquity the liturgy, like other aspects of Christian public life, became more formalised, but significant regional variations still remained and have remained to this day, even for the central rites of the eucharist (Cabié (1983), Laverdiere (1996), Smith (2003)) and baptism (McDonnell and Montague (1994), Saxer (1998), Johnson (1999)). The evolution of baptismal rites during this period in turn raised further questions concerning the status of catechumens awaiting baptism in the early Church (Dujarier (1979)), and the emergence of infant baptism, whose origins and motivation continue to be the subject of considerable debate (Jeremias (1958, 1963), Aland (1963), Wright (1987b, 2005)). The rising prominence of Christianity from the 4th c. onwards also placed a new emphasis on the importance of Christian preaching (see Brown (1992) and the edited volumes of Hunter (1989) and Cunningham and Allen (1998)), represented most vividly in the controversial career of John Chrysostom. The 4th c. similarly saw the appearance of new forms of Christian expression through music and hymnography, forms which would evolve dramatically in subsequent centuries (Quaesten (1930), Werner (1959–84), Foley (1992)).

In the past few decades, the significance of archaeology for liturgical studies has been increasingly recognised. There is a valuable introduction to archaeological sources for the liturgy in Chiat and Mauck (1991), and numerous works have highlighted the importance of the

physical setting and artefacts of Christian ceremonial. The inter-relationship between the liturgy and the evolution of Christian architecture has been rightly emphasised (see Bouyer (1967), and the works of Mathews (1971) on Constantinople and de Blaauw (1994) on Rome), as has the significance of the silver liturgical vessels found in a number of late antique treasure hoards (Mundell Mango (1986a, 1986b), Boyd and Mundell Mango (1992), Hauser (1992)). The survival of baptisteries and baptismal fonts has likewise contributed to our understanding of the ceremony of Christian initiation and its development (see among others Davies (1962), Khatchatrian (1980, 1982) and Ristow (1998)).

Finally, on a broader scale, the study of topography and the use of sacred space has revealed the context in which the drama of Christian ceremonial took place (Baldovin (1987), Saxer (1989), Bauer (1996)). It is against this background that the emergence of a distinctly Christian calendar must be seen (Talley (1991), Beckwith (1996, 2005)), focused around the holy day of Sunday (Rordorf (1962), Bacchiochi (1977), Beckwith and Stott (1980)) and the great festival of Easter (Bertonière (1972), Strobel (1977), and the edited volume of Bradshaw and Hoffman (1999)). This calendar was to set the rhythm of life in Christian Europe for over a millennium.

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Orthodoxy, Heresy and Schism

The scholarship devoted to the study of Christian theology is vast and cannot possibly be surveyed in any depth in a single bibliographic essay. Nevertheless, some knowledge of the theology of the early Church is an essential requirement for any student of Late Antiquity, for Christian doctrine underlies the nature of the Church and exerts a powerful influence upon the Christian writers who provide so many

of our primary sources. For a general introduction to early Christian theology, see the works of Kelly (1972, 1977), McGrath (1994) and Pelikan (2003), and the edited collections of DiBerardino and Studer (1996) and Evans (2004). The importance of Christian doctrine within the wider Roman world became ever more significant from the conversion of Constantine onwards. It was Constantine who summoned the first ecumenical council of the Church at Nicaea in 325 which composed the original Nicene Creed, and the reigns of Constantine and his Christian successors greatly reinforced the ongoing definition of Christian 'orthodoxy' and the exclusion of those who, either on grounds of doctrine ('heresy') or ecclesiastical organisation and behaviour ('schism'), came to be regarded as outside the limits of the true Church.

Yet the distinction between 'heresy' and 'schism' in early Christianity is not as clear-cut as the traditional definition I have just given might imply, and most importantly scholars in recent decades have become ever more aware that the separation between 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' is in fact neither as rigid nor as self-evident as our Christian literary sources would like to suggest. Ever since the controversial but fundamental work of Bauer (1934), it has been recognised that these concepts must be handled with great care, and so too must the potential distortions of our sources, written almost invariably from the perspective of those whose position would come to emerge as 'orthodox' (see further Le Boulluec (1985) and the article of Perrin in this volume). During the great doctrinal controversies in the 4th and 5th centuries, it was by no means apparent which positions would triumph, and rather than approach these periods in terms of clearly defined alternatives, as the textual evidence so often does, we must recognise the broad spectrums of different beliefs that existed in these times. Only then can we avoid the imposition of polarised and teleological models of interpretation that fail to do justice to the complexity of the debates or the issues at stake.

It is against this background that over recent decades a number of scholars have begun to reassess the controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries and to reconsider traditional interpretations of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' as they are applied to those debates. Archaeology has the potential to make a significant contribution to this ongoing process of re-evaluation, but this potential as yet has not been fully exploited. Many archaeologists unfortunately continue to rely on older theological scholarship which accepted the polemical assertions of our

sources too much at face value, and so seek material evidence for the clear separation of 'orthodox' and 'heretical' churches and congregations which those sources construct. The identification of such sites is on occasion possible and can be valuable, but the criteria used are often inadequate and derive more from the biased textual evidence than from the evidence on the ground. Archaeologists and theologians need to work more closely together to integrate their methodological approaches and to draw out the archaeological evidence which potentially offers a crucial glimpse of the complex reality that lies behind the black-and-white vision of our literary texts.

I cannot attempt to include entries for every early Christian heresy or schism in this essay, and nor does every controversy lend itself to archaeological analysis. Two articles in this volume, my own and that of Bryan Ward-Perkins, discuss the value of archaeology to study of the so-called 'Arian controversy' that divided the 4th c. Church over the relationship of the Father and the Son and the nature of the Trinity. Scholarly approaches to this controversy have developed significantly in past years. This is visible for example in the shifts in emphasis between the study of Hanson (1988) and that of Ayres (2004), and in the more cautious approach to our sources on the presbyter Arius and the concept of 'Arianism' in Wiles (1996) and R. D. Williams (2001) in comparison to the older work of Lorenz (1979). However, archaeological work has been limited and primarily concerned with the conversion of the Germanic peoples to 'Arianism' and the search for 'Arian' churches in the 5th c. Vandal and Gothic kingdoms (Ferrua (1991), Bierbrauer (1998)). The nature of Germanic 'Arianism' is itself a subject in need of greater attention, and archaeology may have an important part to play in assessing the role of the Germanic churches in the organisation of the Germanic kingdoms, and the degree to which the separation of German and catholic churches contributed to the failure of the Goths and Vandals to integrate with their Roman subjects, in contrast to the more successful catholic Franks.

The Donatist schism which also began in the 4th c. represents a different type of Christian controversy, localised almost exclusively within North Africa and originating in a conflict over Church order rather than doctrine. Here again, scholarship has seen a shift in emphasis, with the interpretation of Donatism presented in older works (Tengström (1964), Frend (1971)) challenged in more recent studies (Shaw (1992), Tilley (1997)). In this instance, archaeological evidence has always been of central importance, begun particularly by the work of Berthier in Numidia (1942), and continued in the work of Saxer (1980)

and Duval (1982) on the cult of martyrs, which held particular importance in Christian North Africa. A parallel case from slightly earlier in Christian history can be seen with Montanism, or the New Prophecy, a charismatic movement that began in Phrygia in Asia Minor in the second half of the 2nd c. Montanism spread through much of the early Christian world but it retained particular strength in Phrygia (see now Trevett (1996) and Hirschmann (2005)), and archaeologists and epigraphers have sought to trace the Montanist presence in the physical record with some significant results (Strobel (1980), Tabbernee (1997)).

The other two great controversies of the late antique period were, like the 'Arian controversy', primarily concerned with theology and with the proper understanding of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. However, both the so-called 'Nestorian' controversy that provoked the third ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431 and the division between Chalcedonians and 'Monophysites' (or more accurately 'Miaphysites') after the fourth ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451 differ from the earlier controversy in that there emerged from these debates distinct churches who have remained separate in communion and organisation right down to the present day. The 'Nestorian' controversy has again been the subject of considerable revisionist scholarship in recent years (McGuckin (2004), Wessel (2004)). More importantly, the survival of the Church of the East (sadly often still inaccurately described as the 'Nestorian Church' after Nestorius, who was condemned at the council of 431: see Brock (1996)) outside the Roman empire in Persia and further east, has preserved both textual and material evidence that would otherwise have been lost. This evidence has become increasingly more accessible to Western scholars, and has contributed greatly to studies of Christianity in Persia, Central Asia and China (Le Coz (1995), Gillman and Klimkeit (1999), Baum and Winkler (2000), Tang (2004)).

The debates over the human and divine natures of Christ that led to the condemnation of Nestorius continued after the Council of Ephesus in 431. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 sought to resolve the divisions that these debates had created, but all efforts at reconciliation failed, and over the following centuries there emerged the Miaphysite churches of Egypt, Ethiopia, Syria and Armenia, which rejected the Chalcedonian Definition adopted by the imperial church of Constantinople and the bishops of Rome. The interpretation of Chalcedon has always been a focus for scholarly debate (see, for example, the articles in the edited volumes of Grillmeier and Bacht (1951–54), Roldanus

and van Oort (1997) and Price and Whitby (2009)). But here once more the ongoing existence of the Miaphysite churches has provided insights from different perspectives, and preserved the archaeological records of living churches in regions that after the Islamic Conquests would fall outside the borders of the Byzantine empire (see Honigmann (1951), Frend (1972a), Meinardus (1999) and the edited volumes of Garsoïan, Mathews and Thomson (1982) and Brock and Taylor (2001)). It is to be hoped that such research will continue, for there remains further textual and archaeological evidence to exploit and more still needs to be done to bring the history of the Church outside the Mediterranean world into the mainstream of late antique studies.

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Jews and Judaism

Rabbinic and Non-Rabbinic Judaism

The study of Judaism in Late Antiquity has flourished in recent decades and interaction between Jewish studies and the wider academic community has greatly enhanced our knowledge both of Jewish history and of the place of the Jews in the wider late antique world. A number of collected volumes edited by Jacob Neusner and others provide accessible and updated introductions to the history and scholarly controversies of late antique Judaism (Green (1978), Neusner and Green (1990), Neusner (1995a, 1995b), Avery-Peck and Neusner (1999), Neusner, Green and Avery-Peck (2005), Katz (2006)). The Palestinian heartland of Judaism has continued to receive close attention from Israeli and Western historians alike (Schäfer (1983), Avi-Yonah (1984), Schwartz (2001), Ribak (2007)), and further studies have illuminated Diaspora Judaism beyond Palestine, in Babylonia (Neusner (1965–1970), Kalmin (2006)), and in the Mediterranean (Trebilco (1991), Barclay (1995), Rutgers (1995, 1998)). Encyclopaedias, bibliographic guides and other reference works have appeared in increasing numbers (see especially Neusner, Avery-Peck and Green (2000–2004)). So too have source collections, not only of Jewish texts but of Graeco-Roman accounts of Jews and Judaism and of Jewish epigraphy, while sourcebooks provide valuable aids for students and non-specialists (Whittaker (1984), Williams (1998)). The great works of late antique Judaism, the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds (traditionally dated

to *ca.* 400 and *ca.* 500 respectively), have likewise been the subject of a number of recent studies (Strack and Stemberger (1982), Kalmin (1994), Kraemer (1996), Rubenstein (2003), Fonrobert and Jaffee (2007)), making these fundamental but highly complex texts open to a far wider scholarly audience and bringing them into the mainstream of late antique studies.

Despite the advances of recent scholarship, however, Judaism in Late Antiquity continues to raise a number of important and controversial questions. The most significant of these, certainly in the context of the current volume, concerns the status of rabbinic Judaism. In older scholarship, late antique Judaism is often defined purely as rabbinic Judaism, for it is this conception of Judaism which almost entirely dominates our primary sources. The Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds are products of rabbinic Jews, and so it often appears natural, especially to textual scholars, to view late antique Judaism through the lens of rabbinic literature and practices. Yet such an approach requires one to assume that the diversity that characterised Judaism into the 1st c. A.D. ceased after A.D. 70, and in modern work this assumption has been widely challenged. Not all late antique Jews were rabbinic Jews, and whatever their prominence in our sources, it is by no means clear to what extent the rabbis sought to impose their own view of Judaism as the only correct path. Neither is it clear what authority they held in late antique Jewish society in comparison to other potential authority figures, including the priesthood and the role of female leaders in early synagogues. For a variety of views, see Brooten (1982), Segal (1987), Levine (1989), Neusner (1995a, 1995b), Kalmin (1999), Janowitz (2000) and the contribution of Magness in this volume. By the end of the 8th c. the rabbinic movement was genuinely dominant in Jewish society. But we cannot assume that this was true in Late Antiquity, and there was certainly far greater diversity within late antique Judaism than a purely rabbinic approach would allow.

Archaeology has a central role to play in these debates, a role that has become ever more prominent over the last few decades. Whereas our Jewish literary sources present an almost uniformly rabbinic interpretation of Judaism, the material evidence of buildings, artefacts and inscriptions has highlighted the diversity that the texts conceal and has shed light on numerous other aspects of late antique Jewish society and culture (for a general introduction see Meyers and Strange (1981) and Hachlili (2001)). Jewish archaeology has understandably been most thoroughly developed in Israel itself, with a number of survey volumes

recording past and present excavations (see Murphy-O'Connor (2008) and the earlier encyclopaedias edited by Avi-Yonah (1975–78) and Stern, Lewisohn-Gilboa and Aviram (1993)). Archaeological research in the Jewish Diaspora has been far less systematic, but the Jewish communities in Aphrodisias, Sardis and Rome have all received considerable attention and other sites have attracted shorter notices (for an overall assessment, see Hachlili (1998)). There are still significant questions to resolve, particularly concerning chronology, as we will see when we turn to consider the archaeology of the synagogue. But the archaeological research of the last century has already transformed our understanding of late antique Judaism, and further work in cooperation with Jewish textual and rabbinic historians is essential if we are to continue to advance.

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Architecture and Art

Jewish architecture and art, like their Christian equivalents, offer an essential but complex and controversial insight into the Jewish world of Late Antiquity. Evidence is at times scarce, particularly for the period before the 4th c., and the interpretation of that evidence raises significant and as yet unanswered questions. This is above all true of research into the characteristic building form of late antique Judaism: the synagogue. Scholarship on the Palestinian synagogue was long dominated by a tripartite typology of development within which it was argued that three synagogue types emerged in sequence: the 'Galilaean' type in the 2nd and 3rd c., the 'Transitional' type in the 4th c. and the 'Byzantine' type in the 5th and 6th c. (Kohl and Watzinger (1916), Sukenik (1934)). However, this conception of linear development rested once again on the assumption of a monolithic rabbinic Judaism that evolved over time, and in recent years this model has been increasingly rejected. For surveys of this ongoing debate, see Levine (2005) and the edited volumes of Gutman (1981), Levine (1981, 1987), and Avery-Peck and Neusner (2001). The chronology of the sites that originally underlay the typology has been challenged, and the different types appear to be regional as much as they are chronological, with no clear pattern of architectural development. Different designs could appear at the same time in different regions, while the diverse architecture of the Diaspora differed again from that of the Jewish homeland. In contrast to Christian churches, which adopted fairly swiftly a relatively consistent plan, synagogues thus reflected the diversity within Judaism and the absence of any single controlling power. Dating remains difficult, but the earliest synagogue which can be dated with confidence remains that of 3rd c. Dura Europus. The great expansion in synagogue architecture now appears to have begun in the 4th c., and to have peaked in the 5th and 6th c., perhaps in reaction to the rise of Christianity and the increasing role of the rabbinic and priestly class.

The origins and role of the synagogue in late antique Judaism also raise further questions (see the edited volumes of Fine (1996) and Kee and Cohick (1999). After the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in A.D. 70 the Jews faced a problem concerning the place and focus of their worship and it has been argued that the Temple provided the model for later synagogues. Yet there is some evidence for Jewish communal gatherings of the form that would become characteristic

of the synagogue over a century before the Temple's destruction, and in any case a synagogue played a very different role to that of the Temple. Congregations did not enter the Temple, which was where sacrifices were offered to God by the priests, whereas the synagogue was a setting for congregational worship (I will return to the question of synagogue liturgy in the next section). There appears to have been a debate within late antique Judaism itself over the correct functions of a synagogue, and further archaeological and textual research is still required. For an introduction to synagogue archaeology and architecture see Meyers (1996) and Milson (2007), while bibliographies on individual synagogue sites are listed below. The majority of the most studied locations fall within Israel-Palestine, including Beit She'an (ancient Scythopolis), Capernaum and Sepphoris. But there are also several important Diasporan sites that have received detailed analysis, most famously of course the synagogue of Dura Europus and more recently the no less valuable evidence from Sardis. Overall, much very good research has been done, but there is still a need for further work on sites in the Diaspora in particular, while scholars have increasingly recognised that we must look beyond the synagogues that dominate so much of our evidence and seek to place individual Jewish communities within their local and Mediterranean contexts. For further reading, see the general works listed in the previous section under archaeology, while for the sites of Beth She'arim and Dura Europus see also the article of Magness, and for Sepphoris the article of Weiss, both in this volume.

The study of Jewish art faces many of the same problems that limit our knowledge of early Christian art. Little evidence exists for Jewish art before Late Antiquity, the only fully decorated synagogue to survive being that of 3rd c. Dura Europus on the Euphrates, with scriptural imagery focused particularly on the story of Moses. Yet, although the Ten Commandments forbid the veneration of images, the Jews have always used art to express themselves (Konikoff (1973), Hachlili (1988, 1998), Prigent (1991)). Christian and Jewish art inevitably overlap with and influence each other, and all exist within the cultural framework of the Graeco-Roman world, but after A.D. 400 Jewish and Christian art became increasingly distinct and our evidence for Jewish art becomes more plentiful. Extant wall decorations from synagogues remain rare, but rich floor mosaics and catacomb art survive (Gutmann (1984), R. and A. Ovadiah (1987), A. Ovadiah (1995), Milson (2007)), often characterised by the use of particular symbols (Goodenough (1952–1968)),

most famously the menorah or seven-armed candlestick and the signs of the Zodiac. However, despite occasional assumptions to the contrary, it is not possible to speak of a single Jewish artistic tradition. Some of the imagery preserved in synagogues and elsewhere draws upon rabbinic teachings, but this is by no means universal, and the material culture of every Jewish community has to be studied according to its own influences and identity.

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Jewish Liturgy

The nature and evolution of Jewish liturgy in Late Antiquity is a highly controversial subject: for a sense of how arguments have shifted across the last century, compare the older classics of Elbogen (1913) and Idelsohn (1932) with the more up-to-date articles of Sarason (1982) and Reif (1983, 1991). This is to a large degree due to the nature of our evidence. Our literary sources are once again almost exclusively rabbinic in character, and in any case provide little detail on how even a rabbinic liturgy might have been performed. The chronology of synagogue development, as we have already seen, is a difficult subject in its own right, and it is therefore not easy to trace how architectural designs may have evolved over time to accommodate changes in ceremonial practice. It should further be emphasised that the precise liturgical function of the late antique synagogue was not as clearly defined as it would become in medieval times, making it difficult to draw upon later periods when our evidence improves. Thus, for example, the separation of women from men in synagogues is only known with certainty from the 9th c., and cannot be imposed back on earlier sites as has been proposed for Capernaum. The purpose and organisation of Jewish and Christian liturgy also differ significantly, and so any potential comparisons must be approached with care.

The above cautionary remarks notwithstanding, recent scholarship has highlighted a number of important features of late antique Jewish liturgy and its development. Perhaps most significantly, the late antique period saw for Judaism, as for Christianity, an increasing formalisation of authoritative texts, notably the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, and of prayers and readings, which in turn underlay the evolution of a newly defined synagogue liturgy (Posner, Kaploun and Cohen (1975), Hoffmann (1979), Petuchowski (1983), Levine (1999)). This process saw a revival in the use of Hebrew as the language of the synagogue, although Greek and Aramaic continued to be spoken as well. It also saw the emergence of new forms of Jewish poetry and hymnography for liturgical use (see especially Werner (1959–84)). The wider ceremonial context in which the synagogue liturgy was performed also evolved

in Late Antiquity, as has been demonstrated by modern studies of the history of the Jewish calendar (Stern (2001), Beckwith (2005)), another aspect of this period shared by Christianity and Judaism alike.

The emerging role of the rabbis was one important factor in this process of Jewish liturgical development, but so too was the rise of Christianity. The relationship between Jewish and Christian liturgy is extremely complex. Initially, attention focused on Jewish origins for Christian liturgical practices (see Beckwith (1992)), notably the Jewish blessing of the food, particularly used for the Passover meal, which appears to have influenced the Christian eucharist (Heinemann (1977), DiSante (1991)). But scholars are now increasingly aware that Christianity has also exerted a powerful influence on the evolution of Jewish liturgy and ceremonial. A number of liturgical changes in synagogue design in Late Antiquity appear to have emerged through interaction or competition with churches. The role of the Torah shrine as a focus of holiness in the synagogue, as at Dura Europus and in later synagogues, parallels the role of the Christian altar. Similarly, the separation between the holy and the non-holy, created by the use of chancel screens, seems to have only become widespread in synagogues in the 5th c., having appeared in churches from at least the early 4th c. There had been a chancel screen warding the original Temple from non-Jews, which could have provided a model for the later synagogues, and similar screens were known in law courts and other secular contexts familiar to both Jews and Christians. But their development in synagogues in the 5th c. is most likely to have some relationship with their earlier appearance in churches, although the church chancel screen separated the clergy at the altar from the congregation, while the synagogue screen marked off the Torah shrine (Habas (2000)). The Jewish liturgy thus seems to have been influenced by Christian practices, whether through peaceful interaction or controversy, a relationship that merits further scholarly attention.

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The Jews in the late antique World

The place of the Jews within the wider pagan and Christian world of Late Antiquity has never lacked scholarly attention, yet remains an important area for further research and debate (see the works listed under the Jewish Diaspora above, particularly Feldman (1993), Rutgers (1995) and Goodman (2007)). Our rabbinic texts tend to emphasise distance and separation from the surrounding pagan culture (for the Talmudic evidence, see Schäfer (1998), Schäfer and Hezer (2000), Freidheim (2006)), and in older scholarship this emphasis was often accepted at face value. Studies of Roman imperial law both before and after the conversion of Constantine appeared to reinforce the separation of the Jews (Rabello (1980, 1987–1988), Linder (1987, 1997)), while scholarly attitudes were also understandably influenced by the events of the 20th c. and the long history of anti-Semitism (Parkes (1934), Gager (1983), Schäfer (1997)). Yet the reality was far more blurred, and here once again archaeology offers a broader perspective that the literary sources cannot provide. Jews, pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity lived in the same cities and drew upon a shared spectrum of values, concepts and iconography. This is not of course

to suggest that differences did not exist, or to deny the importance to Jews as to Christians of a strong and distinct sense of identity. But our approach to such questions must be more nuanced than the textual evidence alone will allow.

The relationship between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity also raises further questions. For the Jews just as for the Christians, this was a period of transition and definition. This is reflected as we have seen in the emergence of the rabbinic class and the codification of rabbinic literature, the development of Jewish architecture and art, particularly in the context of the synagogue, and the evolution of Jewish liturgy. To what extent was this Jewish emphasis upon self-definition a response to the challenge of the corresponding developments within contemporary Christianity, and what role did anti-Jewish polemic play in the self-definition of Christianity itself? How did their shared Graeco-Roman background impact upon the process of definition in both religions? And should we see these developments more in terms of mutual influence and dialogue rather than conflict and controversy? These are questions that are already under discussion in modern scholarship (see Taylor (1995), Horbury (1998), Blumenkranz (2006), and the edited volumes of Shanks (1992) and Becker and Reed (2003)), and which need to continue to draw together archaeologists, historians, theologians and rabbinic scholars. That there was interaction between Jews and Christians and between Jews and the wider Graeco-Roman world cannot be doubted, as a number of recent regional studies in Antioch, Aphrodisias and Palestine have further reinforced. But the scale and nature of that interaction still requires further study, in which archaeology, no less than textual evidence, must play a central role.

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Samaritans

The monotheistic sect known as the Samaritans have until relatively recently received only limited attention from mainstream late antique scholarship. However, Samaritan studies have flourished for this period, and a number of valuable introductory works are now accessible in English and German (Schur (1992), Anderson and Giles (2002), and the edited volumes of Crown (1989), Dexinger and Pummer (1992), and Crown, Pummer, and Tal (1993)), as well as source collections and bibliographic aids. In Jewish rabbinic texts and Roman law the Samaritans and the Jews are clearly distinct groups, but archaeologically this distinction is not always easy to trace (for surveys of the evidence, see Dar (1986), Pummer (1989), and Dar's contribution to this volume). Culturally and geographically Jews and Samaritans were very close, and, even within the region of Samaria and Mount Gerizim in central Israel, Samaritan material remains can be difficult to identify. Certain artefacts and architectural types have been classified as characteristically Samaritan, including lamps (Sussman (1978, 1986–87, 2002)), sarcophagi (Barkay (1989, 2002)) and synagogue design (Kippenberg (1971), Hüttenmeister and Reeg (1977), Safrai (1979), Magen (1992, 1993, 2002)). Yet such classifications remain disputed and require further attention. The place of the Samaritans in the wider late antique

world likewise remains little explored outside of Hebrew Samaritan studies, with the partial exception of the great 6th c. Samaritan revolts under the emperor Justinian (Crown (1986), Rabello (1987–88)).

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Manichaeism

The dualist religion known as Manichaeism, founded by the Persian religious leader Mani (A.D. 216–74/7), spread widely through the Mediterranean world and beyond from the 3rd c. onwards. For a long time Manichaeism was known primarily from the hostile polemic of Christian writers, who regarded the Manichees as a serious threat. In the last few decades, however, our knowledge has dramatically increased with the discovery of Manichaean sites, texts and artwork, both from within the Roman empire, in North Africa and Egypt and in Mesopotamia, and as far away as Central Asia and China. This evidence has inspired a new appreciation for the expansion and long survival of Manichaeism, especially in the East, and has confirmed Manichaeism as a coherent religion in its own right, with remarkable uniformity from Late Roman North Africa to Medieval China, despite inevitable regional and temporal variations.

Our increased knowledge underlies a number of important recent works on Manichaean history (Lieu (1992, 1994, 1998), and the edited volume of Mirecki and BeDuhn (2001)) and on Manichaean doctrines and teachings ((Merkelbach (1986), BeDuhn (2000)). Manichaean sources have been collected and are now far more accessible (non-specialists are particularly recommended the volume of Gardner and Lieu (2004)), and include illuminated books of a very high artistic standard (Klimkeit (1982), Gulacsi (2005)). This ongoing research will, it is hoped, continue to enhance our understanding of the relationship between Manichaeism, Judaism and Christianity (see for example Drijvers (1981), Chadwick (1990), Reeves (1992) and the edited volume of BeDuhn and Mirecki (2007)), and of the place of Manichaeism in the late antique world.

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Asceticism and Monasticism

Over the past few decades, asceticism and monasticism have represented one of the greatest areas of growth in late antique studies. The practice of *askesis*, the life of austerity and self-discipline, has traditionally been approached through the Christian lens that dominates our sources, although asceticism had a long history in Graeco-Roman antiquity (see Francis (1995) and the edited volume of Wimbush (1990)) and in Judaism (Diamond (2004)), which provided the background against which Christian ascetic ideals would emerge. Within Christianity, asceticism provided a new expression of faith and dedication, particularly from the 4th c. onwards as persecution of the Church faded into memory, and created a new ascetic elite to whom other Christians looked for guidance and inspiration (I will return to the cult of martyrs and the rise of the holy man slightly later in this essay). The charismatic authority of these ascetics raised potential tensions with the ecclesiastical Church hierarchy (Rousseau (1978) Leyser (2000)), while ascetic practices also influenced the role of the bishop, and shaped expectations of how clergy were expected to live and act (Sterk (2004), Rapp (2005)). At the same time, ascetic values penetrated far more widely into late antique society as a whole. They influenced attitudes towards food and to sexuality (Brown (1988), Grimm (1996), Shaw (1998)), and set a model for the Christian life that was to have a profound impact on the medieval world.

The most widely documented and studied form of Christian asceticism in Late Antiquity is of course monasticism (for general introductions see Chitty (1966), Guillaumont (1979), de Vogüé (1991–98), Dunn (2000)). Christian monasticism took many forms, a diversity that has at times been somewhat concealed by an emphasis upon certain famous monks and monasteries, and upon particular regions, notably Egypt. The conventional classification of monasticism distinguishes two essential types, the eremitic monasticism of the solitary hermit, first exemplified by the Egyptian monk Antony (A.D. 251–356), and

collective cenobitic monasticism, originally associated in Egypt with Antony's younger contemporary Pachomius (A.D. 292–346). Yet there were other types of monasticism which, although less successful in the long term, nevertheless flourished in Late Antiquity (for a valuable discussion of one such divergent monastic tradition, see Caner (2002)), and both eremitic and cenobitic monasticism varied significantly in different regions and in different periods.

Early Egyptian monasticism is unquestionably of great importance, and exerted a powerful influence on monastic developments elsewhere. For an overview, see Meinardus (1989) and the general works cited above, while for a survey of the material evidence, see Walters (1974), Gabra with Vivian (2002) and Grossman (2002). A number of Egyptian monastic sites have received detailed archaeological analysis, including the regions of Kellia and Sinai and the Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes (see the site bibliographies listed below). But scholars have increasingly recognised the need to study other regional and local monastic traditions on their own terms. Recent studies have greatly expanded our knowledge of monasticism in Palestine (Hirschfeld (1992), Binns (1994), Patrich (1995)) and in Syria (Peña, Castellana and Fernández (1983), Escolan (1999)). Such research has highlighted the marked differences between monasticism in those regions and in Egypt, and within those regions themselves. Monasticism in the West similarly developed along its own regional and local lines. This process has been traced in Britain (Bond (2004), Foot (2006)), and in Gaul (Prinz (1965), James (1981), Bonde and Maines (1988)), in Italy (Penco (1983), Jenal (1995)), and in Spain (de Urbel (1961), Diaz (1986, 2001)). Byzantine monasticism has also attracted much needed attention (Savramis (1962), Janin (1975), Morris (1995), Hatlie (2007)), and scholars have begun to trace the impact of Islam on monastic evolution in Egypt and Syria under Arab rule (Livne-Kafri (1996), and the two articles of Fowden (2004)).

All these works together represent a revolution in our knowledge of late antique monasticism, a revolution in which archaeology has played a fundamental role. Monasticism and asceticism were long studied through the numerous literary sources, hagiographies, miraculous stories, monastic rules, ascetic letters and ecclesiastical histories and chronicles. Archaeological evidence was initially cited merely to support and illustrate the literary texts. It is only relatively recently that monastic archaeology has become more systematic, and has offered new insights into aspects of monasticism omitted or downplayed in our literary sources. Differences in the layout and organisation of monastic

foundations between and within regions have been highlighted, and the social and economic life and production of monasteries is slowly coming into focus (Brenk (2004), Patrich (2004), Schachner (2005)). Further excavation and survey work can only increase our understanding of the diversity and material reality of monastic life in Late Antiquity, and in conjunction with the ongoing study of monastic texts will shed further light on this characteristic feature of the late antique religious world.

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Holy Men, Martyrs and the Cult of Saints

Like asceticism, with which it is closely associated, the rise of the holy man in Late Antiquity has been the subject of much scholarship in recent years. The classic article of Peter Brown (1971) brought the Christian holy man into the centre of debates over the nature of late antique religion and society, and those debates have continued unabated down to the present time (see Cox Miller (1983), Brown (1995, 1998), Vessey (1998)). Yet just as Christian asceticism drew upon ideals that already existed among Graeco-Roman pagans and Jews, so too the concept of the holy man, although usually viewed through our predominantly Christian sources, can be traced through paganism (Fowden (1982), Anderson (1994)) and Judaism (Green (1979), Lightstone (1985) Kalmin (2003), Diamond (2004)). The holy 'men' of Late Antiquity were also of course not always men, for holy women too played an important role (Cloke (1995), Petersen (1996), Coon (1997)). Overall, there was once again immense diversity among these figures, how they lived, and the roles they played. All holy men and women were held as mediators between the earthly world and the divine, but there was no single pattern of behaviour through which this mediation was achieved, and every individual holy person must be approached on their own terms. One extreme category of holy men, the stylites or pillar-saints, are discussed in detail by Lukas Schachner in his article in this volume. Other prominent cult figures who offer

an opportunity to draw together textual and archaeological evidence include the martyrs, and the saints, whose veneration saw the rise of relics and icons as a focus for late antique religious devotion.

Martyrdom is often regarded as a characteristically Christian concept, and it is beyond question that the martyrs and their sacrifice did play a crucial role in forming and maintaining Christian identity in the early centuries of the Church (see in general Delehaye (1933), von Campenhausen (1964), Frend (1965), and more recently Castelli (2004), Grig (2004), Burrus (2008)). Yet laying down one's life for one's religious beliefs was not unique to Christianity, and here too the Christians drew on existing traditions, particularly within Judaism, in shaping their ideals (Droge and Tabor (1992), Boyarin (1999), Shepkaru (2006)). Nevertheless, it was within Christianity that the cult of the martyrs achieved its greatest prominence, celebrated in numerous literary texts, and in archaeological remains which reveal the development of the martyrium as a specialised architectural form (Grabar (1943–46), Deichmann (1970), Mazzoleni and Bisconti (1992) and the edited volume of Lamberigts and Van Deun (1995)). Martyrs themselves still varied in the nature of their suffering and their individual character, with a number of important female martyrs of whom Perpetua is perhaps the most famous (Ide (1985), Shaw (1993), Salisbury (1997), Cooper (1998)). The cult of the martyrs inevitably developed across time, as the threat of pagan persecution faded during the 4th c. but the possibility of internal Christian persecution emerged. Martyr cult also naturally varied according to the regional impact of persecution and the presence of local martyrs to venerate. Such cults were therefore particularly strong in certain regions, including Rome, where so many early Christians died (Amore (1975), Ferrua and Carletti (1985)), and North Africa, where the cult of the martyrs became closely associated with the Donatist Schism (Saxer (1980), Duval (1982), Frend (1982)).

The rise of the cult of the martyrs must be set within the wider context of the emergence during Late Antiquity of the Christian cult of the saints (for an introduction, see Cunningham (2005) and the articles edited by Howard-Johnston and Hayward (1999)). Veneration of the saints, including New Testament figures, martyrs and deceased holy men, developed from the 4th c. onwards, in part to fulfil the mediatory role that the worship of local pagan deities had previously provided. Different forms of veneration appeared in different regions of the Christian world, including in the West (Brown (1981), Crook (2000)), and in Byzantium (Seiber (1977), Jolivet-Lévy, Kaplan and Sodini (1993) and the edited volume of Hackel (1981)). Numerous

individual shrines have been excavated (see the regional bibliographic surveys below), and where possible compared to the extensive hagiographical and miraculous literature that has been preserved.

The archaeology of the cult of the saints also plays a further role in tracing the increasing importance in Late Antiquity of relics and icons, through which the mediation of the saints could be performed. The veneration of relics first emerged on a significant scale in the 4th c., beginning with the discovery of the True Cross which was later attributed to Constantine's mother Helena (Borgehammar (1991), Drijvers (1992)). The status of relics then grew rapidly over the following centuries, through both physical remains and objects sanctified by contact with holy figures (for an overview, see Angenendt (1994)). Despite some opposition to the practice, reliquaries and architectural designs for relic veneration became steadily more ornate, although this development still awaits detailed scholarly treatment, and by the early medieval period the translation and even the theft of relics was not uncommon (Geary (1990), Smith (2000)). Icons, representations of sacred figures, were to prove still more controversial. The precise origins of the Christian icon remain a subject of debate (Kitzinger (1954), Cameron (1992), Elsner (1997), Büchsel (2003)), but as we saw earlier in this essay Christian art had itself aroused tensions in the early Church. As the use of icons to venerate Christ, Mary and the saints increased, this aroused new fears of idolatry (Belting (1990), Schönborn (1994), Barber (2002)). These fears came to a head in the Byzantine Iconoclasm of the 8th and 9th c., which led to the destruction of a number of early icons, although this opposition to icon veneration in Byzantium was eventually defeated (see Pelikan (1990), Parry (1996), and, for the wider background to Iconoclasm, the articles edited by Bryer and Herrin (1977)). Icons never became so widespread in Western Christianity, and were later condemned by the Protestant Reformation, but they remain central to the worship of the modern Orthodox Church.

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Pilgrimage

Like asceticism, pilgrimage in Late Antiquity has traditionally been studied in a Christian context (for a general introduction to scholarly debates see Kötting (1950), Maraval (1985), Oursel (1997), Bitton-Ashkelony (2005) and the articles edited by Ousterhout (1990) and by Caseau, Cheynet and Déroche (2006)). The concept of travelling to venerate a particular individual or to worship at a particular shrine was not alien to either pagans or to Jews (see Kötting (1950) above, Kerkeslager (1998) and the articles edited by Elsner and Rutherford (2005) with bibliography), but it is true that it was within late antique Christianity that pilgrimage became increasingly popular and organised. However, we must be careful not to exaggerate the extent of pilgrimage organisation in this period. Most of our evidence derives from only a handful of major sites. Some of these are known primarily through textual sources, such as Jerusalem and the Holy Land (Hunt (1982), Biddle (1999), Wilkinson (1999, 2002)), or Rome (Birch (1998) and the edited volume of D'Onofrio (1999)). Others have benefitted more from archaeological analysis, including the shrine of St Menas at Abu Mina in Egypt (Grossman (1989), Bangert (forthcoming)), and the cult of St Thecla at Meriemlik in Asia Minor (Herzfeld and Guyer (1930), Hellenkemper (1986), Davis (2001), Johnson (2006)). The movement of pilgrims can also be traced through the circulation of pilgrim tokens and souvenirs received by those who visited specific sites (Vikan (1982), Witt (2006)), of which the Menas ampullae are the most famous and spread throughout the Mediterranean and beyond (Witt (2000), Gilli (2002), Bangert (fortcoming)).

What this literary and material evidence demonstrates is that late antique pilgrimage took many different forms, as Susanne Bangert emphasises in her article in this volume. Pilgrimage could be individual and collective, local and international, and every pilgrimage centre followed its own path of organisation and development. There is no single pattern that can be imposed on the many different sites that pilgrims visited across the late antique world, and more work is

needed to draw together the textual and archaeological sources and to understand each site on its own terms within the broad spectrum of pilgrimage in Late Antiquity.

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Magic

The study of magic is one of the most important areas of growth in recent scholarship on the late antique religious world. Once disregarded as inferior superstition unworthy of serious attention, magic has now been accepted as an essential component of the spiritual and social environment of Late Antiquity, and the relationship between magic and traditional religion has been recognised to be far more complex than scholars had once believed. For a sense of how attitudes have shifted over time, see the older works of Frazer (1913), Butler (1949), Douglas (1966) and Thomas (1971), and compare their arguments to the more recent theoretical approaches laid down in Vyse (1997), Cunningham (1999), Becker (2002), and Frankfurter (2005). The history and role of magic in Graeco-Roman Antiquity has been the subject of a number of recent studies, among which see in particular Luck (1985, 2000), Clerc (1995), Graf (1997), Dickie (2001) and Janowitz (2001). These studies have in turn helped to refine the understanding of the place of magic in Late Antiquity and beyond visible in the works of Flint (1991), Janowitz (2002), and Bailey (2008), and in the edited collections of Maguire (1995) and Bremmer and Veenstra (2002).

The literary and material evidence for magical practices in Late Antiquity is diverse, and continues to expand. Magical writings have become far more accessible through the discovery of new papyrological collections and the editing of existing texts, including the Greek Magical Papyri (Preisendanz and Henrichs (1973–74), Betz (1992)) and the Hermetic Corpus (Scott (1936), Festugière (1944–54), Festugière and Nock (1945–54), Copenhaver (1992), Ebeling (2007)). Such texts provide an important alternative to the often hostile comments of our mainstream historical and religious authors, and for a convenient introduction to the varied magical texts see the sourcebook

of Ogden (2002). Archaeological research has identified an impressive variety of late antique magical artefacts and has brought to light a number of sites where magical rites took place, including the use of cave sanctuaries in Attica (Fowden (1988)) and the Fountain of the Lamps in Corinth (Wiseman (1972)), both of which are discussed further by Karivieri elsewhere in this volume.

Magic penetrated into all levels of late antique society, for magic could take many forms and be invoked for many different purposes. Love and curse magic make up a substantial proportion of our evidence (Gager (1992), Faraone (1999)), as does necromancy (Ogden (2001)). Alchemy also developed in the ancient world (Lindsay 1970, Halleux (1981)), and astrology and divination were extremely popular in Antiquity and continued in different forms into the Christian Roman empire (Barton (1994a, 1994b)). The artefacts employed in magical rituals were equally diverse. Amulets of a variety of types have been discovered, many performing a protective function (Bonner (1950), Kotansky (1994), Spier (1993)), while marriage rings could possess religious and magical significance (Vikan (1984, 1990), Walker (2001)). Magical gemstones were also important, and are the subject of Sfameni's article later in this volume. Bowls were used for incantations, often inscribed with Aramaic texts (Isbell (1975), Naveh and Shaked (1985)), and inscribed lamps also featured in cult rituals, most famously again the finds from the Fountain of the Lamps in the Gymnasium at Corinth (Wiseman (1970), Garnett (1975), Jordan (1994)).

It is against this background that scholars have now returned to the crucial and ongoing debate concerning the relationship between magic and the wider religious world of Late Antiquity. Pagans, Jews and Christians alike frequently express distrust of magic, and seek to separate magic and 'superstition' from the practices of 'proper' religion. Yet the reality was always more complex, and the distinctions more blurred, than such polemic was prepared to admit. The prominence of theurgy within the Neoplatonic tradition of Iamblichus and Julian 'the Apostate' attests to the role that magic could play even within highly intellectual pagan philosophy (Hirschle (1979), Fowden (1986), Athanassiadi (1992), Shaw (1995)), as does the popularity of the Chaldaean oracles within the same philosophical circles (Lewy (1978), Athanassiadi (1999), van Liefferinge (1999)). Jewish rabbinic texts cautioned against Greek magic, but Jewish mysticism and spirituality promoted ritual practices that could easily be described as magical (Sperber (1994), Kern-Ulmer (1996), Swartz (1996), Lesses (1998)). And although contemporary Christian writers repeatedly condemn magic, an attitude

that exerted a powerful influence upon later scholarly views, magical texts and artefacts clearly remained in use in Christian contexts (Aune (1980), Thee (1984), Smith (1996), Flint (1999)). Here again there is a need for further research and for increased cooperation between textual scholars and archaeologists, for only then can we do justice to the complexity and diversity of magic and its role in Late Antiquity.

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Popular Religion

'Popular religion' has always been a difficult concept for late antique historians to study. Partly this reflects the nature of our literary evi-

dence, which inevitably derives primarily from the upper levels of society, and which within Christianity and Judaism is often composed by those who held positions as clergy or teachers, rather than by their congregations and students. Yet there are also serious potential problems with the idea of 'popular religion' itself. Such a phrase implies a visible distinction between 'official' or 'elite' religion and the 'popular' religion of the masses, a distinction that was by no means as apparent in Late Antiquity as some of our textual sources would like to suggest. The Christian separation of clergy and laity was never absolute and the status of the clergy was still evolving in this period, as was the status of priests and rabbis in Judaism, and of the Manichaean elect. Pilgrimage, belief in magic, and the Christian cult of the saints and veneration of relics have all been described as in some sense 'popular', but such practices were common across every social class and among priests and laity alike. Scholars have therefore moved away from the artificial distinction of 'official' and 'popular' religion, and have sought to uncover the evidence for private beliefs and rituals, both pagan (Festugière (1954), Teixidor (1977), Morgan (2007)) and Christian (Faivre (1984), Brenk (2003) and the articles edited by Burrus (2005) and Krueger (2006)). This approach has highlighted again the diversity of the late antique religious world, and here once more archaeology plays a crucial role, offering insights into material culture and popular piety at social levels which our literary sources cannot provide (see for example the study of Bakker (1994) on private religion in Ostia).

One reflection of the strength of personal belief across the general population in Late Antiquity is the role that the general population played during this period in the theological and ecclesiastical controversies within Christianity in particular. The issues at stake in those controversies, above all in the doctrinal debates of the 4th and 5th c., often seem trivial to modern Western audiences, and of little significance except to the theologians and bishops who compose our literary sources. Yet the controversies had a far wider impact than such a judgement would allow on the lives and religious convictions of men and women at all levels of society (Gregory (1979), Lyman (1993), Lim (1995b), Maier (2005)).

Further approaches illuminate other aspects of late antique personal religion at a level outside official hierarchies and authoritative creeds and doctrines. One question that has aroused much debate in recent years concerns the widely varying attitudes of Christian authors towards the pagan classical literary tradition, and whether those authors who

drew upon that tradition should be viewed as religiously apathetic or indeed as themselves pagan (see the articles of Lepelley, Humphries with Gwynn, and Jeffreys in this volume). Other scholars have emphasised the rise during Late Antiquity of mystical and apocalyptic ideas both in Christianity and in Judaism (see Rowland (1982), McGinn (1991), Elior (2004, 2007) and the edited volumes of Hellholm (1988) and Collins (2000)). Such ideas were often dismissed or condemned by religious leaders, but clearly exerted a profound influence upon individuals from many different periods and backgrounds. The diversity and intensity of personal religious belief in Late Antiquity underlines once again the importance of religion in this period of history and the need for scholars to continue the literary and archaeological work surveyed in this essay if we are to engage with the full breadth of the late antique religious world.

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JEWS AND SAMARITANS

THIRD CENTURY JEWS AND JUDAISM AT BETH SHEARIM AND DURA EUROPUS

Jodi Magness

Abstract

Recently scholars have questioned the role of the rabbis in late antique Palestine, suggesting that their influence was more limited than previously thought. Furthermore, some scholars have suggested that members of the priestly class remained influential in Jewish society after 70 C.E. In this paper, I examine the catacombs at Beth Shearim in Israel's Lower Galilee and the Dura Europus synagogue for evidence of non-rabbinic Jews or non-rabbinic practices, including priestly presence and influence in the 3rd c.

Introduction

Our sources indicate there were various Jewish groups in Judea before 70 C.E., including Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Hasidim, and Boethusians.[1] However, late antique Judaism is often viewed through the lens of rabbinic literature and practices, as if Jewish diversity ceased to exist after 70. Martin Goodman has commented:

> The standard assumption that these Jewish groups disappeared soon after 70 is therefore no more than an assumption. Furthermore, the presuppositions which have encouraged the assumption are so theologically loaded that historians' suspicions should be instinctive…My hypothesis is that groups and philosophies known from pre-70 Judaism continued for years, perhaps centuries, after the destruction of the Temple.[2]

[1] The Talmud itself refers to 24 sects, as noted by Boyarin (1999) 2. All dates refer to the Common Era unless otherwise indicated.

[2] Goodman (1994) 348 and 355. Goodman's observation may be supported by evidence for 3rd c. Galilean Jewish-Christians (Christians who were apparently ethnic Jews) with Pharisaic leanings; see Boyarin (1999) 29; Baumgarten (1992) 39–50. Also see Swartz (1996) 11: "Recently, though, there has been increased recognition that ancient Palestinian and Babylonian Jewish societies were complex ones, encompassing

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), pp. 135–166

Even if Jewish groups changed or were reconfigured after 70, the fact remains that rabbinic norms were just one of many and that different Jewish groups were in dialogue and tension with each other.[3]

Over the last decade or so, a number of scholars have identified evidence for the rise or re-emergence of the Jewish priestly class in Late Antiquity. For example, Rachel Elior associates Hekhalot literature with the descendants or successors of the dispossessed Zadokite priests: "although there were surely other centers of power, authority and knowledge at all times…no social group other than the priests commanded the sacred authority, the eternal, dynastic privilege, rooted in the sacred scriptures and in divine assurance".[4] She attributes the emergence of Hekhalot literature to the need to create a new spiritual world after the destruction of the Second Temple, especially among certain priestly circles.[5] According to Elior, "the authors of this literature were inspired directly by priestly tradition and belonged to circles whose concern was to preserve and consolidate a visionary and ritual tradition associated mythopoetically with the Temple service".[6] After the destruction of the Temple, the ritual traditions of the priests serving in the earthly Temple were transferred to angels ministering in seven celestial sanctuaries in an attempt to perpetuate the Temple traditions beyond the boundaries of time and space.[7]

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tensions between circles within the rabbinic estate, and between the academy and other sectors of the population".

[3] See Schwartz (2002) 56–57. For the view that Christians should be considered as a Jewish group during this period, see Boyarin (1999) 17 and 23. According to Goodman (2000) 5, the rabbis viewed Christianity as another form of gentile 'alien worship'.

[4] Elior (2004) 5.

[5] Elior (1997) 222–24.

[6] Elior (1997) 226; also see Elior (1993) 25; Elior (2004) 263.

[7] Elior (1997) 233. This type of speculation had its origins before the destruction of the Second Temple, when the Zadokites were replaced as officiating priests by the Hasmoneans; see, for example, Gruenwald (1998) 130: "For people who considered the temple as being defiled by the hands of an unworthy clan of priests, there was left no alternative but to conceive of God as having to withdraw His presence from the earthly temple to the uppermost heaven whereto the defiled hands of a sinful priesthood could not reach". For ascension stories in apocalyptic literature from Qumran that reflect animosity towards the Jerusalem (non-Zadokite) priesthood, see Gruenwald (1998) 132. According to him (138): "Apocalypticism gives, among other things, expression to that criticism of the Jerusalem-priesthood". After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Zadokite criticism of the Jerusalem priesthood became irrelevant, which explains why Hekhalot literature (unlike earlier apocalyptic literature) lacks polemics against the priestly usurpers. But for a recent suggestion that the Hasmoneans *were* Zadokites, see Schofield and VanderKam (2005).

Oded Irshai has described priestly activity in Late Antiquity, which he argues increased after the decline and abolition of the Patriarchate.[8] Not all scholars accept the claims of priestly prominence or agree on the extent of priestly influence.[9] Nevertheless, the studies of Elior, Irshai, and others are important because they have removed late antique Judaism from its traditional rabbino-centric focus and indicate that different groups continued to exist after 70, even if the composition and nature of these groups changed over time. The problem that confronts modern scholars is identifying these groups and their differences when nearly all of our evidence comes from rabbinic literature and early Christian sources. Similarly, we had almost no knowledge of the Qumran sect before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. If we reorient our perspective so that rabbinic literature reflects the views and interpretations of just one Jewish group among many, the picture changes. Presumably these groups (which were not monolithic and could overlap) differed on the interpretation and practice of specific points of Jewish law, just as the rabbis express differences among themselves.[10] Here I examine the catacombs at Beth Shearim in Israel's Lower Galilee and the synagogue at Dura Europus for evidence of magical and mystical practices and of priestly presence. In addition, an examination of the iconography of the Dura synagogue suggests that eschatological or messianic expectations circulated among the local Jewish community.

Beth Shearim

In the 1930s and 1950s, excavations at Beth Shearim conducted by Benjamin Mazar and Nahman Avigad revealed a series of underground tombs cut into the lower slopes of the hill on which the ancient town was built.[11] The necropolis encircles the town on the north-eastern, northern and western slopes of the hill and spreads onto the hills to the north and west. The earliest tombs date to the 1st c. B.C.E.

[8] Irshai (2004).

[9] See for example Fine (2005) and Stern (2005).

[10] Perhaps some of these groups are referred to as *minim* in rabbinic literature, a term which could refer also to Christians or Judeo-Christians; see Boyarin (1999) 23–41.

[11] For the final reports on the Beth Shearim excavations, see Mazar (1973); Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974); Avigad (1976).

and 1st c. C.E.[12] After Judah ha-Nasi's death and interment at Beth Shearim (*ca.* 220), the necropolis became a magnet for the burials of wealthy Jews from Palestine and the Near East, including a large number from Palmyra.[13] However, Tessa Rajak recently has suggested that most of the Jews buried in the catacombs lived in Palestine before their death. She describes the necropolis as "a glorified local cemetery, whose catchment area happens to be rather large".[14] According to the excavators, burials ceased after the town was destroyed during the Gallus revolt in 351.[15] But recent studies have suggested that the Gallus revolt had a limited and insignificant impact on Galilee. In fact, Fanny Vitto has demonstrated that the town was occupied and flourished through the Byzantine period (i.e. into the 6th c.) and that burials continued in the necropolis.[16]

The tombs of the 3rd and 4th c. are typically catacombs consisting of corridors that give access to burial halls.[17] Although all of the burials were inhumations, bodies were disposed of in various ways, including in limestone, marble, clay, lead, or wood sarcophagi or in arcosolia, troughs, loculi, or pits hewn into the floors and walls of the caves. Large numbers of stone and marble sarcophagi were found only in Catacomb 20.[18] There is some evidence for ossilegium (the collection of bones in ossuaries or pits after the flesh decayed), a custom that continued from the late Second Temple period.[19] There is also evidence for secondary burial among Diaspora Jews. The popularity of large catacombs and inhumation in sarcophagi reflects contemporary burial customs elsewhere in the Roman world.[20]

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[12] See for example Mazar (1973) 22.

[13] Avigad (1976) 2 and 265.

[14] Rajak (1998) 361.

[15] Avigad (1976) 3; but see Mazar (1973) 94 and 97, who observes that Halls I and J in Catacomb 1 seem to have been used until the early 5th c.

[16] Vitto (1996) 138–39; this was already suggested by Dan Barag (1976) 208–209. Also see Avigad (1976) 191, who noted that "[t]he date of these lamps is very significant for determining when catacomb 20 went out of use and when it was robbed. If there is no time gap between these lamps and those attributed to the first half of the fourth century, then these lamps could be attributed to a burial period which continued without interruptions after the first half of the fourth century".

[17] For an above-ground mausoleum, see Mazar (1973) 31; for the Leontios inscription from the mausoleum, see Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 97–107.

[18] Avigad (1976) 263.

[19] For bones collected in sarcophagi see Avigad (1976) 107.

[20] See Toynbee (1971) 40 and 234–35.

A number of rabbis are mentioned in the inscriptions from Beth Shearim.[21] Rajak notes that "the spatial distribution at Beth Shearim rather points to the rabbis as just one kind of special group among others", whose burials were not segregated or marked off from the others.[22] The following rabbis (or their relatives) are named in inscriptions: Rabbi Isaac son of Mokimos and Rabbi Paregorius (Catacomb 1);[23] '—son of Yose Rabbi the pious' (Catacomb 1);[24] Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi Aniana, and Rabbi Gamaliel (Catacomb 14);[25] the daughters of Rabbi Gamaliel and Rabbi Judah son of Rabbi Gamaliel (Catacomb 20);[26] Miriam daughter of Rabbi Jonathan (Catacomb 20);[27] Lady Miriam daughter of Rabbi Judah (Catacombs 25–26);[28] and (from Catacomb 20) Rabbi Hillel son of Rabbi Levi, the daughter of Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Joshua, the sons of Rabbi Judan son of Rabbi Miashah, the lady Mega wife of Rabbi Joshua son of Levi, and Gamaliel son of Rabbi Eliezer.[29] The last-named rabbi—Gamaliel son of Rabbi Eliezer—was just 17 years old at the time of his death.[30] An inscription found near the synagogue at Beth Shearim refers to Rabbi Samuel who arranges (the limbs of the dead) and Judah who lays out the corpse.[31]

Several inscriptions attest to the presence of priestly families.[32] A priestly family buried in Catacomb 1 came from the Galilean town

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[21] But none of them is known from rabbinic literature except for the members of the Patriarch's family; see Irshai (2004) 83, n. 43; Cohen (1981–82).

[22] Rajak (1998) 355. But Weiss (1992) 369 shows that many rabbis chose to be buried near each other.

[23] Mazar (1973) 39 and 41 (in the corridor).

[24] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 26.

[25] The excavators identified these as the sons and successors of Judah ha-Nasi; see Avigad (1976) 53–54 and 63.

[26] Avigad (1976) 102.

[27] Avigad (1976) 105.

[28] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 199.

[29] Three of the six inscriptions refer to members of one family; see Avigad (1976) 108–109.

[30] Avigad (1976) 251. For a discussion see Rajak (1998) 351, who suggests that the title could be given to members of rabbinic families. This may find support in a passage from the Talmud cited by Weiss (1992) 370: 'the sons of rich men are like the children of sages, children of sages are like the children of royalty, and their funeral rites must be attended' (Tractate Semahot 3:4).

[31] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 189. For different readings of this inscription see Rajak (1998) 363–64, n. 39.

[32] All but two of the inscriptions associated with the priestly family from Arab buried in Catacomb 1 are in Greek and even the Hebrew names are written in Greek transliteration! One woman bears the Greek theophoric name Dionysia; see Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 28 and 32.

of Arab (Araba), home of the Petahyah family of priests. A seven-branched menorah was incised next to the Hebrew and Greek inscriptions *cohanim* and *hiereon*.[33] Another Hebrew inscription in the same catacomb reads 'This place belongs to priests. Woe!'[34] Two inscriptions in Catacomb 1, Hall K refer to Sarah daughter of Nehemiah and mother of the priestess Lady Maria.[35] Hall K also contained the burial of Rabbi Paregorios. Moshe Schwabe and Baruch Lifshitz noted that Sarah and Miriam were not priestesses. Instead Miriam was a *cohenet*, the wife of a priest: "The relatives of the deceased wanted to indicate in the epitaph that Sarah was the mother of a cohen's wife. We cannot find a better proof of the high social status of the priests in the Jewish community".[36] They suggested that special burial plots were reserved for priests.[37] Other evidence for priests includes a Greek inscription from Catacomb 13 that reads 'Cohen from Beirut'.[38] Two inscriptions from Catacomb 13 refer to Yudan the son of Levi.[39] An inscription from Catacomb 16 mentions 'Judah the priest' and another refers to 'the *priest Rabbi* Hieronymos', that is, a priest who also held the title rabbi.[40]

A few inscriptions name community leaders: Aidesios, the head of the Council of Elders (Gerousiarch), from Antiochia (Catacomb 12);[41] Eusebius the head of the synagogue of the people of Beirut (Catacomb 13);[42] Jacob from Caesarea, the head of the synagogue, of Pamphylia (from the area of the synagogue);[43] and Yose, the archisynagogos from Sidon (Catacombs 25–26).[44]

The discovery of figured images decorating the catacombs and sarcophagi forced modern scholars to re-evaluate the traditional understanding of rabbinic period Judaism. As Rajak notes:

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[33] Mazar (1973) 93 and 201; Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 28.

[34] Mazar (1973) 93 and 201; Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 28. Another Greek inscription refers to 'The memorial of Jesus from 'Araba'; see Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 31.

[35] Mazar (1973) 102.

[36] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 42–44.

[37] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 28 and 213.

[38] This could be a family name; see Avigad (1976) 30. Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 133 identify Cohen here as the social rank of the deceased, not the family name.

[39] Avigad (1976) 30.

[40] Avigad (1976) 71. Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 153 note that all four inscriptions from this catacomb are in Greek.

[41] Avigad (1976) 27.

[42] Avigad (1976) 36; Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 141.

[43] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 190–91.

[44] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 200.

> Epitaphs and images incorporate themes which may be said to belong to a different [non-rabbinic] Jewish value-system… It is fairly clear that their [the rabbis'] own style was markedly different and their own dead are not commemorated by Greek epigrams. It looks, therefore, as though the rabbis were not in control.[45]

Alongside the figured images are numerous depictions of menorahs and other Jewish symbols such as Torah Shrines. The figured images include the following:

- Winged figures, including one on the arch of a passageway connecting two rooms.[46]
- Ships and dolphins,[47] apparently connected with the Graeco-Roman concept that the dead dwelled in the blessed isles across the ocean, which was represented frequently in funerary art by the journey of the dead on ships and by dolphins and other sea-creatures.[48] The dolphin became a popular symbol of Christian resurrection, referring to the carrying of the deceased to safety or immortality.[49]
- A man with hands raised in prayer, apparently Daniel in the lions' den.[50]
- Butterflies and human figures, apparently representing the souls of the dead.[51]
- Masks: a Dionysiac motif common in Roman funerary art.[52]
- Gladiators, lions, and eagles.[53]

Fragments of imported marble sarcophagi from the catacombs were decorated with Greek and Roman mythological figures and scenes, including Aphrodite holding a shield, an amazonomachy, and Leda and the swan.[54]

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[45] Rajak (1998) 355. Her remarks complement Schwartz (1998) 205: "the rabbis may have lived in the cities, but were somehow not precisely of them".
[46] Mazar (1973) 61 and 80–81.
[47] Mazar (1973) 117, 126, 138 and 151 (ships); Avigad (1976) 148–49 (dolphins).
[48] See Toynbee (1971) 38.
[49] Jensen (2000) 159.
[50] Mazar (1973) 77–78 and 137.
[51] Mazar (1973) 163 and 172–74.
[52] Avigad (1976) 81–82 and 107; see Toynbee (1971) 39.
[53] Mazar (1973) 178 (lions); 182–83 (gladiators); Avigad (1976) 22 (eagle).
[54] Avigad (1976) 164–71. For the sarcophagus with Leda and the swan see Schwabe and Lifschitz (1974) 106–107; Avigad and Mazar (1993) 247.

In addition to the figured images, a Greek abecedary was inscribed on the arch of a passageway between two rooms in Catacomb 1,[55] and two Hebrew abecedaries were incised on arcosolia in Catacomb 25.[56] Schwabe and Lifshitz noted that:

> The abecedaria had a magic and apotropaic value, based upon astrological creeds, which attributed to the alphabetic lines an astral signification. The seven vowels corresponded to the seven planets and the seventeen consonants to the twelve signs of the zodiac and the five elements; or the 24 letters formed into pairs represented the signs of the zodiac. The letters of the alphabet were regarded as the symbols of the world and the stars…alphabetic lines of this type are common on non-Jewish graves.[57]

Many of the inscriptions at Beth Shearim are in Greek and include references to Jews with Greek names such as Theodora, Kalliope, Diadora, Epitychios, and Socrates.[58] Avigad noted that all of the men referred to in the Hebrew inscriptions have Hebrew first names, whereas all of the women have Graeco-Roman names and several have the Greek title Kyra.[59] One of them, Kyra Mega, was the wife of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi.[60] Avigad suggested that Catacombs 14 and 20 were used by rabbinical families who continued to employ the Hebrew language until the end of the 2nd c.[61]

Several inscriptions refer to the resurrection of the dead, a belief that was accepted by the rabbis. An inscription from Catacomb 13 reads: 'Whosoever shall change the place of this one, God who resurrects the dead shall judge him'.[62] The Greek epigram of Karteria from Catacomb 18 says 'so that even after the end of life's term you

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[55] In Hall N, consisting of the first eight letters; see Mazar (1973) 122.
[56] Mazar (1957) 163.
[57] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 46–47.
[58] Avigad (1976) 230 noted that Greek predominates: "It emerges that Greek was the tongue spoken by many Palestinian Jews and by all the Diaspora Jews, except for a small group of Palmyrene Jews who also wrote in Palmyrene…The Greek inscriptions are not only more numerous, but also generally longer and more heterogeneous in content…The Hebrew inscriptions, on the other hand, were short and meager in content: most of them contained one or two words (the word shalom and/or a name); only two were longer". There are almost no Greek burial inscriptions in Catacomb 20, where Hebrew predominates, and no Aramaic inscriptions from Catacombs 14 and 20; see Avigad (1976) 232–33.
[59] Avigad (1976) 230–31.
[60] Avigad (1976) 231.
[61] Avigad (1976) 231.
[62] Avigad (1976) 36; Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 139.

may both enjoy again new indestructible riches'.[63] An inscription from Catacomb 20 wishes the deceased 'Good luck in your resurrection'.[64] A long inscription from Catacomb 20 about Atio daughter of Rabbi Gamaliel, and Ation daughter of Rabbi Judah, son of Rabbi Gamliel, ends 'May their resurrection be with the worthy'.[65]

Contemporary Christian tombs were decorated with images referring to resurrection. For example, the mid-3rd c. mausoleum of the Julii in Rome displays a scene of Jonah and the whale, symbolising death and resurrection, as well as a figure of Christ-Helios in his chariot.[66] Robin Jensen notes that "Belief in resurrection was an essential part of Christian faith in late antiquity and a hope visually expressed in the catacomb paintings or sarcophagus reliefs".[67]

Finally, the acclamation '*Eis theos boethei*' is painted in red on the arch of a passageway in Catacomb 7.[68] We shall consider this inscription in the discussion of the synagogue at Dura Europus, to which we now turn.

Dura Europus

Excavations at Dura Europus in the early 1930s brought to light the remains of an ancient synagogue decorated with a stunning cycle of wall-paintings.[69] The paintings are preserved thanks to an earthen embankment piled along the inner face of the city wall, which buried the synagogue during the Sasanian siege in 256, when Dura was destroyed and abandoned. The synagogue is located in a residential block next to the western wall of the town. It was originally a private dwelling that was converted for use as a synagogue, probably between 165 and 200.[70] In 244/45 the building was remodelled and decorated with a new set of paintings.[71] The paintings on the west wall are preserved to their full height (Fig. 1). On the north and south walls fewer

[63] Avigad (1976) 77–78.
[64] Avigad (1976) 95; Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 180.
[65] Avigad (1976) 102.
[66] See Toynbee (1971) 140.
[67] Jensen (2000) 156.
[68] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 89.
[69] Kraeling (1956) remains the definitive study of the building and wall-paintings.
[70] Kraeling (1956) 327.
[71] Kraeling (1956) 6. All illustrations are reproduced from Kraeling (1956) with the permission of Yale University Press, which holds the copyright.

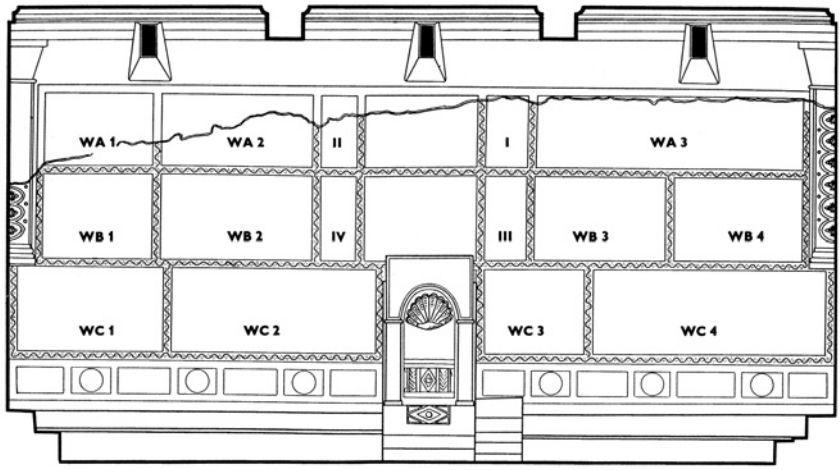

Fig. 1 Diagram of the painted panels on the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Plan IX, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

than half of the paintings are preserved, and on the east wall only parts of the lowest registers are preserved.[72]

The main hall or hall of assembly consists of a single room lined with benches and a Torah Shrine in the centre of the west (Jerusalem-oriented) wall (see Figs. 1, 2). The synagogue was accessed through an open courtyard surrounded by additional rooms which presumably served the Jewish community. The building had a flat roof with wooden ceiling beams forming a framework for ceiling tiles.[73]

Because of its remote location, scholars have long recognised the problems inherent in understanding the Dura synagogue and its community in light of rabbinic writings, including the Babylonian Talmud.[74] Since the Dura synagogue is contemporary with many of the tombs at Beth Shearim, it provides important complementary archaeological evidence on Judaism in the 3rd c.

Before considering the wall-paintings, I wish to discuss a less well-known find from the synagogue, described as follows by Carl Kraeling in the final report:

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[72] Kraeling (1956) 39.

[73] Kraeling (1956) 12–15.

[74] For example Goodenough (1988) 184: "We may question, however, that the Judaism of Dura ever resembled at all closely the Judaism of the Babylonian communities".

> The doorpost [of the main doorway into the hall or House of Assembly] pivoted in the hollowed block and rested on the iron plate. Toward the east the cavity housing the socket had a noticeable extension. This lay under the doorsill itself, being gouged out of the rubble bedding upon which the sill was set. In the pocket of the cavity was found a collection of bones that are reported to have been parts of two human fingers. Their presence at this point cannot have been the result of an accident, because of the genuine inaccessibility of the pocket and because of the discovery of analogous remains in the socket of the south doorway. The bones, whatever their character, must therefore represent a foundation deposit of the kind known to us also at Dura from pagan structures.[75]

According to Kraeling, these bones would have rendered the site and people approaching it impure.[76] However, the Mishnah and Talmud stipulate that individual human bones without flesh convey impurity only through direct contact:

> Two hundred forty-eight limbs [are] in man: thirty in the foot, six in each toe; ten in the ankle; two in the shin; five in the knee; and one in the thigh; three in the hip; eleven ribs; thirty in the hand; six in each finger; two in the forearm; two in the elbow; one in the upper arm; four in the shoulder—one hundred one on one side, one hundred one on the other. Eighteen vertebrae are in the spine; nine in the head; eight in the neck; six in the breast; five in the genitals. Each one conveys uncleanness through contact, and through carrying, and through the Tent. When? When there is on them an appropriate amount of flesh. But if there is not on them an appropriate amount of flesh, they convey uncleanness through contact and through carrying but do not convey uncleanness in the Tent (Mishnah Oholot 1.8).[77]

The Babylonian Talmud states: 'For we have learnt: "A bone the size of a barley grain causes defilement by contact and carrying, but not by cover"' (Tractate 'Erubin 4a).[78]

The Tosefta discusses this passage as follows:

> Is it possible that the flesh should render unclean through contact, carrying, and Tent, while the limb should be clean? Said R. Simeon, "I should be surprised if [under all circumstances] R. Eliezer declared it unclean. He declared it unclean only when there is on the limb appropriate flesh,

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[75] Kraeling (1956) 19.

[76] Kraeling (1956) 19, n. 86.

[77] All translations of the Mishnah are from Neusner (1988).

[78] Unless otherwise noted all translations of the Talmud are from the Soncino Talmud; see Simon (1960–). The Soncino Talmud's note to this passage states that 'only a backbone, a skull, and the like cause the defilement of a person in the same tent or under the same roof or cover'; Simon (1960–) 19, n. 10.

> so that this and this should render unclean through contact, carrying, and Tent" (Ohalot 2:7).[79]

These passages indicate that even according to rabbinic *halakhah* (which may or may not have been followed at Dura), the human bones buried beneath the synagogue's threshold would not have conveyed impurity.

Kraeling interpreted the buried bones as a foundation deposit, a common phenomenon in the ancient Near East.[80] However, he noted that the parallels for this practice come from pagan, not Jewish contexts.[81] Near Eastern foundation and building deposits were generally built into the walls or placed under the floors of buildings (usually palaces and temples), and most of them are much earlier in date than the Dura synagogue. Human remains are rare and consist mostly of infants, and the burial of individual human bones is unparalleled in Near Eastern foundation deposits.[82]

The placement of human bones under the threshold of the main doorway leading into the synagogue suggests apotropaic motivations.[83] Richard Ellis noted that the reasons for ancient Near Eastern foundation and building deposits included sanctification and a desire to protect the building against hostile powers.[84] Similar practices are evident at Beth Shearim, where symbols and inscriptions with apotropaic value were placed on the archways of passages between rooms: the abecedary in Catacomb 1, Hall N;[85] two winged figures in Catacomb 1, Hall G;[86] and the *Eis theos boethei* inscription in Catacomb 7, Hall A.[87] In the Christian baptistery at Dura, an *Eis theos* inscription was written on a doorjamb leading from the courtyard and several abecedaries were written on the walls near doorways in the Christian building.[88]

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[79] Translation from Neusner (1977) 84.

[80] Kraeling (1956) 19.

[81] In addition to the references cited by Kraeling (1956) 19, n. 86, see Ellis (1968).

[82] See Ellis (1968) 35–42.

[83] In fact, Kraeling (1956) 361 suggested they were buried for magical purposes.

[84] Ellis (1968) 165–66.

[85] Mazar (1973) 122.

[86] Mazar (1973) 80–81.

[87] Schwabe and Lifshitz (1974) 89.

[88] Welles (1967) 95 and 125; on 126 he discusses how this inscription and other elements in the Christian building attest to magical and apotropaic practices. For the abecedaries in the Christian building see Welles (1967) 90–92, nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8. For abecedaries on the walls of the temples of Bel, Gadde, and Azzanathkona at Dura, see Welles (1967) 89; on 90 he lists examples from secular contexts at Dura.

The possibility that the bones were buried for apotropaic reasons does not explain why such a deposit occurs in the Dura synagogue alone. Why would human finger bones protect the entrance to the building from evil or sanctify it? A passage from the Babylonian Talmud may shed light on this phenomenon:

> Why do they go to the cemetery? With regard to this there is a difference of opinion between R. Levi b. Haman and R. Hanina. One says: [To signify thereby], we are as the dead before Thee; and the other says: In order that the dead should intercede for mercy on our behalf (Tractate Ta'anith 16a).

This passage indicates that the dead were considered intercessors for the living. Perhaps the bones buried under the threshold of the Dura synagogue represent the remains of someone who the congregation hoped would intercede with God on their behalf. In this regard, the relics of saints buried under the apses of churches might provide a better analogy than ancient Near Eastern foundation deposits (although obviously there are significant differences).[89] Could it be that the buried bones belonged to a priest, who in this capacity acted as an intercessor for the congregation? Although this is admittedly speculative, it is interesting to note that this congregation's leader was a priest and that the synagogue was filled with Temple-oriented imagery, as we shall see.[90]

The Dura synagogue was decorated with images that are clearly apotropaic. Two ceiling tiles were painted with eyes surrounded by other symbols including yellow lampstands (not menorahs), snakes, and a scorpion.[91] The letters IAO (the Gnostic name for God) might

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[89] To be clear, I am not suggesting any direct connection between the Christian cult of relics and the Dura bone deposit. Sukenik (1947) 187, n. 2 says there is no support for the suggestion that these bones belonged to a saint who was buried there in order to sanctify the spot. I thank Hanan Eshel for bringing this reference to my attention.

[90] If the finger bones belonged to a priest, could their burial have been intended to symbolise the invocation of the priestly blessing? The placement of two pairs of human fingers under either end of the threshold is suggestive of the manner in which the blessing is bestowed. If this is true the bones would have been buried for apotropaic purposes, to protect the entrance to the assembly hall and perhaps symbolically bless those who entered. The bones were located directly opposite the Torah Shrine, which was decorated with imagery associated with the Jerusalem Temple. In this case the bones may have been placed as if the priest was invoking the blessing in front of the Temple.

[91] Kraeling (1956) 48–49 describes them as "apotropaic eyes"; see Figs. 11–12.

be written above one of the eyes.[92] Kraeling suggested that these two tiles were located near the doorways and noted that the belief in the power of the evil eye was widespread among ancient Jews, especially in Babylonia.[93] The following passages from the Babylonian Talmud are attributed to Rab, who was a contemporary of the Dura synagogue:[94]

> Whither did the Rabbis go? Rab said: "They died through an evil eye" (Tractate Sanhedrin 93a).
>
> And the Lord shall take away from thee all sickness. Said Rab: "By this, the [evil] eye is meant". This is in accordance with his opinion [expressed elsewhere]. For Rab went up to a cemetery, performed certain charms, and then said: "Ninety-nine [have died] through an evil eye, and one through natural causes" (Tractate Baba Mezi'a 107b).

Astrological symbols painted on ceiling tiles from the Dura synagogue include two examples of Pisces, 17 of Capricorn, and 21 Centaurs.[95] Other animals painted on the ceiling tiles may have also had astrological and/or apotropaic value, including dolphins (15 examples) and hybrid monster serpents (three examples).[96]

The painted dado that encircled the base of the walls inside the assembly hall was decorated with animal figures, including 16 lions, tigers, and leopards, and 14 masks (4 of men and 10 of women).[97] Kraeling noted the Dionysiac connections of the masks, some of which are clearly theatrical.[98] Many of the same animal and theatrical motifs decorate the catacomb walls and sarcophagi at Beth Shearim.

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[92] Kraeling (1956) 49, n. 89.

[93] Kraeling (1956) 41.

[94] See Kraeling (1956) 49, n. 93.

[95] Because the Centaur lacks a bow and dangles a fish in one hand, Kraeling (1956) 42–43 suggested identifying this symbol as the non-zodiacal Centaur of the southern hemisphere instead of the astrological sign of Sagittarius. But on 43, n. 43 Kraeling notes that the non-zodiacal Centaur does not appear in Babylonian astronomy.

[96] Kraeling (1956) 43. It is not clear why only Centaurs, Capricorn, and Pisces are represented, as Kraeling (1956) 52, n. 103 observed: "The fact that the range of the astral and zodiacal signs is so limited, both in the Dura Synagogue and in other buildings of the city, is undoubtedly important, but precisely what the import of the selection was, it is difficult to determine". In his discussion of the Hammath Tiberias mosaic Moshe Dothan noted that Capricorn was the first sign of the Julian solar year, which began with the first sign of winter; see Dothan (1983) 47. Also see Gordon (1996) 50–57. Pisces is also a winter sign.

[97] Kraeling (1956) 242–49.

[98] Kraeling (1956) 250.

A number of scholars have pointed to parallels between the synagogue and other religious buildings at Dura, including the Temple of Bel, the Mithraeum, and the Christian baptistery (located just two blocks from the synagogue). In all these buildings the image of the cult deity was placed or shown on the cella wall opposite the main doorway (in the Christian baptistery the Good Shepherd occupies this position and in the synagogue the Torah Shrine). In the Mithraeum scenes from the life of Mithras were depicted above the cult image, and similar cycles decorated some of the other temples.[99] The paintings in the synagogue, Christian baptistery, and pagan temples at Dura were arranged with a focal area on one wall and a system of registers on the lateral walls.[100] The four wing panels surrounding the central panels above the Torah Shrine in the Dura synagogue (showing Moses and other figures) are paralleled in the Mithraeum at Dura, where the seated figures of Zarathustra and Ostanes were placed on the outer faces of the piers on either side of the cult niche.[101] But whereas the lateral walls of the pagan temples at Dura were painted with scenes showing worshipers offering incense to the deity, episodes drawn from biblical narrative were depicted in the synagogue and baptistery.[102] This difference is due to the fact that Judaism and Christianity derived their authority from an inspired holy book, key passages of which were displayed on the walls of their respective cultic buildings.[103] The decoration of the synagogue's interior—including on the ceiling tiles and Torah Shrine—visually expressed the concept that the building is

[99] Kraeling (1956) 348; also see Welles (1967) 157. Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 154 noted that "[t]he ceiling [of the synagogue] presented an image of fecundity and natural order constructed largely from a pre-existing repertory of tile designs, showing that the Durene Jews drew comfortably on the art of their neighbors. And even the Torah shrine itself was adapted from pagan structures where inset baldachins sheltered cult statues". Also see Welles (1967) 158: "Against the center of the important west wall [of the Christian baptistery] is placed the font with its arched and column-supported canopy, corresponding at least as a structural motif to the Synagogue's Torah Shrine and to the aediculae of the pagan temples".

[100] Welles (1967) 218.

[101] Kraeling (1956) 227; Welles (1967) 157.

[102] Welles (1967) 218; Kraeling (1956) 348.

[103] Welles (1967) 221. On 218–19 Welles notes an analogy with the Late Mithraeum at Dura, where a cycle of twelve scenes surround a representation of Cronos in the arcuated zone around the cult reliefs. This cycle showed important events from the life of Mithras, especially those which affected the welfare of mankind through sacred rites and ritual acts. In other words, the mithraeum, synagogue, and baptistery were decorated with images from the sacred history of their respective cults attesting to their deity's intervention.

a microcosm of the universe, embodying sacred space and representing heaven on earth.[104]

Kraeling suggested that the painted program of the Dura synagogue reflects a single theme:

> It begins with the patriarchs, with Abraham and Jacob in particular, and extends to the re-establishment of the exiled and dispossessed nation in the Land of Promise in the Messianic era. Its concern is with the sacred history of the Chosen People seen in the light of the Covenant promise made to Abraham and confirmed to Jacob, and ultimately brought to fulfilment in its original intent on this earth… The religious problem which the Synagogue paintings reflect is… that of faithful participation in the nation's inherited Covenant responsibilities as a means of meriting the fulfilment of the divine promises and of making explicit in history its divinely determined purpose.[105]

According to Kraeling, the paintings demonstrate a concern with the observance of Jewish law, as expressed for example in the documentation of the origin of religious festivals, the opposition to idolatry, and the conduct of the sacrificial cult.[106] Other scholars have interpreted the paintings in the Dura synagogue in light of midrash, piyyutim, liturgy, social history, or Jewish-Christian polemics.[107]

Shalom Sabar has identified an element of 'religious competition' at Dura.[108] Similarly, Bradford Welles noted that:

> The appearance of Jewish and Christian representational art at Dura is not to be completely understood without consideration of the competitive situation in which the two communities here found themselves… we have to consider seriously the possibility that this [the use of scenes from the sacred history of their faith to decorate the walls of the baptistery and synagogue] was done in part at least in imitation of or in competition with the decoration of contemporary pagan religious edifices.[109]

The Dura synagogue paintings can be understood in light of the dialogue between Judaism and other religious traditions, all of which laid

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[104] Elior (2004) 37. An inscription from the synagogue at Umm el-Amed in Israel's Galilee clearly expresses this concept: 'Yoezer the Hazzan and Shimon his brother made this gate of the Lord of Heaven'; Avigad (1976) 253. Celestial imagery is conveyed by the light blue background of the Torah Shrine in the Dura synagogue; Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 155. The ceiling of the Christian baptistery at Dura was painted with white stars against a dark blue background; Welles (1967) 43–44.

[105] Kraeling (1956) 350–51.

[106] Kraeling (1956) 351.

[107] See Revel-Neher (2004) 74.

[108] Sabar (2000) 161.

[109] Welles (1967) 158 and 219.

claim to a powerful supreme deity and in some cases to salvation.[110] The competition between Judaism and Christianity was more intense than with pagan religions because only Christianity attempted to legitimise itself by appropriating the Jewish heritage. According to Weitzmann and Kessler, the Jews of Dura would not have felt the need to assert the evidence of God's continuing covenant with the Jewish people and His promise of future messianic restoration without pressures and counterclaims from Christianity: "surely it is no coincidence that many of the biblical passages represented in the Dura synagogue are among those made central in Jewish/Christian polemics of the late second and third century".[111]

Judaism was an ancient religion with sacred writings documenting God's repeated intervention on behalf of His people and His promises of future salvation. As Welles observed, "One of the features which the Jewish and the Christian faiths have in common which distinguishes them from most other religions of the ancient Mediterranean world is the possession of an authoritative, inspired holy book".[112] Many of the scenes in the Dura synagogue document instances of God's miraculous powers or His intervention on behalf of His people, including the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses at the well of Be'er, the Ark and the temple of Dagon, Elijah and the priests of Baal, Elijah reviving the widow's son, the triumph of Mordechai, and Ezekiel in the Valley of the Dry Bones.[113] Ezekiel's vision is shown prominently and in great

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[110] Irshai (2000) 128 suggests that "Jewish eschatological schemes and calculations were being moulded in conjunction or as a reaction to the eschatological models that were being disseminated in Christian circles".

[111] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 177 and 179. On the other hand, Welles (1967) 217 noted that the Christian building at Dura does not directly imitate the synagogue and there is no evidence that the Christian community flourished at the expense of the Jewish community. There is also no overlapping of pictorial subjects among the preserved paintings in the two buildings. Furthermore, in contrast to the baptistery, the Christian assembly hall at Dura was not decorated with representational art.

[112] Welles (1967) 221. Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 180 note that "the paintings in the Dura synagogue assert Jewish claims against Christians by 'quoting' the Biblical text literally". Similarly, Lee Levine (2000) 151 has suggested that the appearance of the menorah as a widespread Jewish symbol (and other Jewish religious objects such as the lulav and ethrog) beginning in the 3rd c. parallels the popularity of the cross in Christian contexts. Levine notes that the Samaritans were similarly affected. For the cross as an apotropaic symbol and a sign of Christ's victory over sin and death, see Jensen (2000) 141 and 150.

[113] Similarly, in the Christian baptistery at Dura, scenes depicting Christ's 'Mighty Works' appear to have formed a cycle of paintings; see Welles (1967) 65. In the Dura synagogue, God's presence and power are indicated by the depiction of His hand or by the Ark of the Covenant or through agents such as Moses and Elijah. See Kraeling

detail (Fig. 5) at a time when Christianity, Mithraism, and other cults were promising salvation to their adherents.[114] As we have seen, contemporary inscriptions at Beth Shearim refer to resurrection.[115]

Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones (Ezek. 37) is one of the best known portions of the book and was popular among Jews and Christians. However, the book of Ezekiel was not systematically discussed by the rabbis because of the merkavah vision in chapter 1.[116] According to Elior, the rabbis attempted to exclude the book of Ezekiel from the canon not only because of the opening merkavah vision, but because of its different priestly and sacrificial laws and because of the centrality of the Zadokite priests in Ezekiel's prophecies:[117]

> Rab Judah said in Rab's name: in truth, that man, Hananiah son of Hezekiah by name, is to be remembered for blessing: but for him, the Book of Ezekiel would have been hidden [excluded from the Canon], for its words contradicted the Torah. What did he do? Three hundred barrels of oil were taken up to him and he sat in an upper chamber and reconciled [expounded] them (Babylonian Talmud Tractate Shabbath 13b).

(1956) 359, where he notes the frequent representation of the Ark of the Covenant; in the Christian baptistery, Christ is God's agent.

[114] For this reason, mithraic iconography is perhaps more relevant to a consideration of the Dura synagogue than the late antique synagogues of Palestine. See Gervers (1979) 598, for a discussion of the competition between Christianity and Mithraism. The mithraic legend culminates with Mithras slaying the bull, which released the life-giving blood of regeneration. The mithraeum was a microcosm of the world and by way of extension the place where the slaying of the bull occurred and was re-enacted through the cult. For this reason the representation of the tauroctony was the iconographic focal point of the mithraeum. The slaying of the bull was a symbol of resurrection; see Gervers (1979) 587; Clauss (2001) 51 and 81–82. And the 'resurrection sequence' is one of the most prominent scenes on the walls of the Christian baptistery at Dura, forming a continuous sequence over 5 metres long; see Welles (1967) 72. The baptisms that took place in this building symbolised the new birth and future resurrection of believers in Christ; Welles (1967) 200 and 202.

[115] According to some scholars, the identification of ten small figures wearing Greek garments in the Ezekiel panel as symbols of the ten lost tribes reflects an underlying eschatological message, since they will be part of the future resurrection of all of Israel; see Revel-Neher (2004) 68, following Wischnitzer-Bernstein (1941) 46–47.

[116] Kraeling (1956) 179; and see 358: "on the interpretation of the Book of Ezekiel as a whole, rabbinic authorities were inclined to be uncommunicative". Also see Elior (2004) 208 and 227, who notes that the rabbis tried to abolish the recitation of the first chapter of Ezekiel as the prophetic reading (*haftarah*) for Shavuot. In the present (masoretic) text of Ezekiel, the word merkavah is not mentioned anywhere in the vision, although it occurs in the Septuagint and in the Qumran manuscripts.

[117] Elior (2004) 207; see 176–83 for similar debates surrounding the status of Levi. At the same time, Elior points out that rabbinic tradition is not monolithic and that dissenting voices can be heard.

Four passages in the book of Ezekiel describe the future Temple and emphasise the importance of the Zadokite priesthood: 'the priests who perform the duties of the altar—they are the descendants of Zadok, who alone of the descendants of Levi may approach the Lord to minister to him' (Ezek. 40:46).[118]

Kraeling suggested that Ezekiel is shown in Persian costume to indicate his status as a priest.[119] Thus, the detailed depiction of Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones not only refers to resurrection but alludes to the Zadokite priests, who were the legitimate heirs and guardians of the Temple traditions.[120] As Elior observes, "They were convinced that their leadership was descended from the historical House of Zadok, and hence from Eleazar son of Aaron and his son Phinehas, through the line set out in detail in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1, Ezra 5, and Nehemiah 11".[121] The eponymous founder of the Dura synagogue was the priest Samuel son of Yeda'ya, perhaps the same family known from the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah (see below).[122]

The most important paintings in the synagogue are concentrated on and around the Torah Shrine, which was the focal point of the building and the spot where God's power and presence was concentrated (Fig. 2). A large figure of Aaron—labelled with his name in Greek—is prominently represented in connection with the consecration of the Tabernacle and its priests, above and to the left of the Torah Shrine

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[118] The other three passages are Ezek. 43:19; 44:15–28; 48:11–12; see Elior (2004) 191–92. For a discussion of Ezek. 40–48 with bibliography, see Rooke (2000) 108, n. 7. Goodblatt (1996) 233 suggests that some priests may have favoured a reduction in the status of the king and the establishment of a diarchy consisting of a Davidide prince and priesthood. A number of Qumran texts also envision this type of diarchy, which in effect meant priestly rule since there was no Davidide monarchy. In contrast, Rooke argues that there is no indication that the priests ever sought political (as opposed to cultic) power.

[119] Kraeling (1956) 189; Ezek. 1:3. Elior (2004) 15 notes that Ezekiel was the son of Buzi the priest. In contrast, Wischnitzer-Bernstein (1941) 48 identifies the three figures in Parthian dress as elders of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, representing the kingdom of Judah.

[120] See Elior (2004) 31: "In addition to the heavenly Chariot Throne, Ezekiel also envisioned the future earthly Temple, whose service was entrusted exclusively—as Ezekiel repeatedly stressed—to the priests of the House of Zadok".

[121] Elior (2004) 193.

[122] The term 'small sanctuary' (*miqdash me'at*), which was applied to synagogues in Late Antiquity and alludes to the perpetuation of Temple and priestly traditions in the synagogue setting also comes from the book of Ezekiel (11:16); see Elior (2004) 13 and 241.

Fig. 2 The area around the Torah Shrine in the centre of the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. XXIV, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

(Panel WB2; see Fig. 3, upper centre, and Fig. 1). Aaron is clothed as a high priest and stands next to an altar in front of the Tabernacle, inside which the Ark of the Covenant can be seen. Kraeling identified the scene with the episode described in Exodus 40 and Numbers 7, when the Tabernacle was erected and Aaron, the high priests, and the Levites were installed in office.[123]

Kraeling noted horizontal thematic connections between the panel depicting the consecration of the Tabernacle (Fig. 3) and the panel on the other side of the Torah Shrine, which shows a temple building (Panel WB3; see Figs. 1, 4). Kraeling identifies this building as the Jerusalem Temple: "What the Encampment and the Wilderness Tabernacle inaugurated only foreshadowed, from the later point of view, what Jerusalem and its Temple brought to monumental and perfect expression".[124] There are also vertical thematic connections between the anointing of David to the immediate right of the Torah Shrine and the panel above the Torah Shrine showing David as king over all Israel (Fig. 2).[125] The panel immediately above the Torah Shrine initially depicted a vine flanked by a table and an empty throne, which Weitzmann and Kessler identify as a celestial throne that is the seat of the future king.[126] This panel was repainted with an enthroned man

[123] Kraeling (1956) 130. This event took place on the first day of the month of Nisan. Kraeling based his identification of this scene on the fact that one bull and two lambs are included in the scene, animals which were sacrificed as part of the consecration of the priests as described in Exodus 29:1. The animal in the left foreground is a red heifer (Numbers 19:1–13), the ashes of which were used to make the water of purification necessary for the sprinkling of the Levites; see Kraeling (1956) 130–31. The first day of Nisan was also the beginning of the year according to the solar calendar falling on the vernal equinox and on a Wednesday, the day the heavenly luminaries were created (as expressed in the book of Jubilees); see Elior, (2004) 46–48, including n. 48.

[124] Kraeling (1956) 131. For a discussion of this temple building see below.

[125] Kraeling (1956) 168 and 225. Only 7 (not 8) of Jesse's sons are depicted in the anointing of David scene; Kraeling (1956) 168. The highly charged symbolism of the number 7 counters the claim by Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 81 that "there was simply not enough space for an additional figure". Kraeling (1956) 168 and 220 noted that the depiction of David in these panels is not just historical but expresses eschatological or messianic hopes. In contrast, Flesher (1995) argues against messianic and eschatological messages in the Dura synagogue paintings, mainly on the basis of his claim that David in the central panel above the Torah is not depicted as Orpheus.

[126] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 160; on 158 they suggest that the fruitless vine must refer to the eschatological idea that the tree will bear fruit only when the Messiah comes. Also see Kraeling (1956) 65, where he discusses the original paintings in the panel immediately above the Torah Shrine and identifies a possible theme of a messianic banquet. The repainting of this panel strengthened its eschatological message; see Revel-Neher (2004) 74.

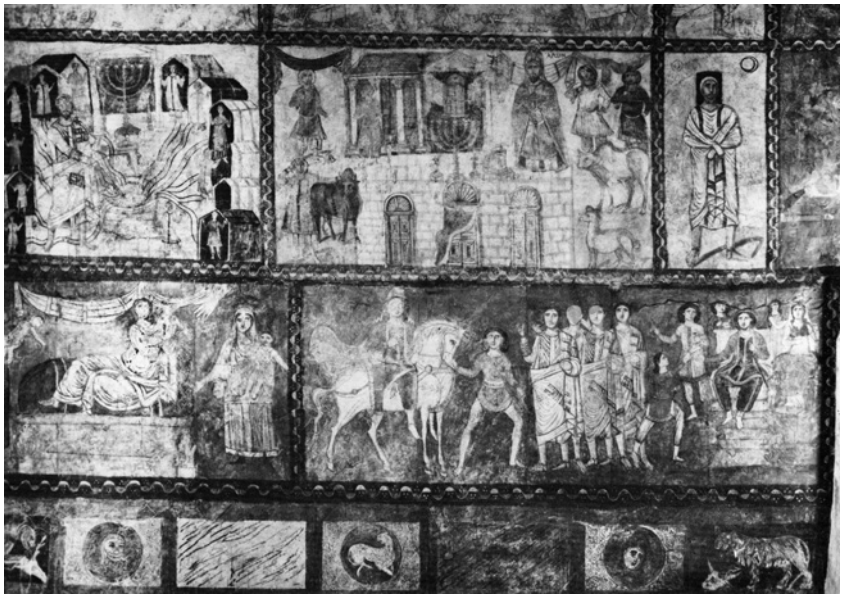

Fig. 3 South half of the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. XVIII, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

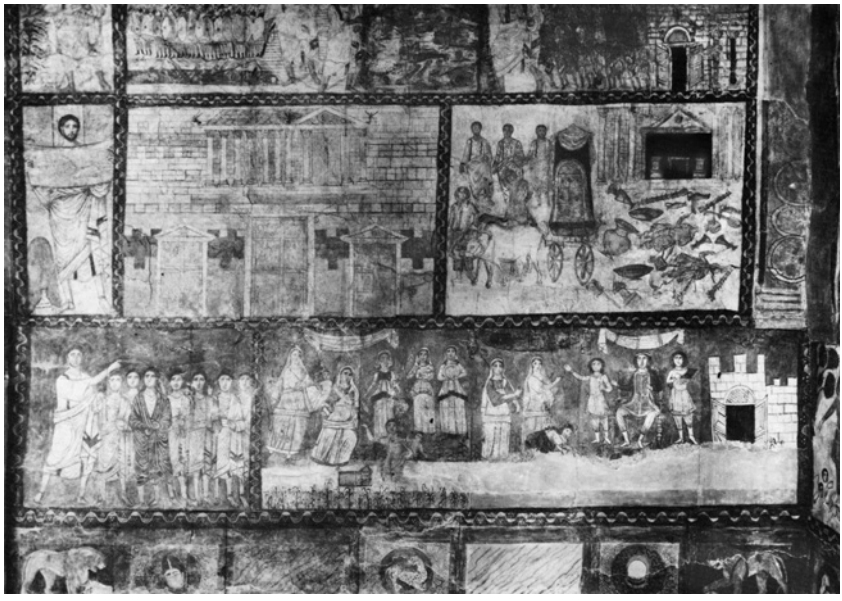

Fig. 4 North half of the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. XIX, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

Fig. 5 Painted panel (NC 1) in the Dura synagogue showing Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. LXIX, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

representing David at the top centre of the vine. He is flanked by two togate figures and a lion (referring to David's ancestral tribe of Judah and by way of extension the genealogy of the messiah) underneath.[127] Kraeling and others have identified the two togate figures as David's priests Zadok and Abiathar, who represent the tribe of Levi.[128] Weitzmann and Kessler believe they represent the priest Joshua ben Jehozadak and Zerubabbel, who rebuilt the Second Temple after the return from the Babylonian exile.[129] Both possibilities emphasise the role of the Zadokite priests. Weitzmann and Kessler suggested that the repainting of the panels above the Torah Shrine strengthened an eschatological message regarding the future arrival of a messianic king who would rebuild the Temple, countering Christian claims that the messiah had already come.[130]

[127] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 164. For the lion as a symbol of Judah and David's ancestry see also Kühnel (1986–87) 148. Flesher (1995) 363 argues that the vine was painted over in the second phase.

[128] See Flesher (1995) 362.

[129] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 165–66.

[130] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 169.

In my opinion these thematic connections can be emphasised even more strongly.[131] The façade of the Jerusalem Temple is prominently depicted in the centre of the arch of the Torah Shrine (Fig. 2). To its left is a large menorah with a lulav and ethrog, and to the right the offering of Isaac by Abraham.[132] The offering of Isaac identifies this building as the Jerusalem Temple, since this event took place on Mount Moriah. In other words, the depiction of the offering of Isaac serves as a geographical marker, indicating that this is the Jerusalem Temple and connecting the Temple directly with the Torah Shrine. The depiction of the Jerusalem Temple on the Torah Shrine, which is located on the Jerusalem-oriented wall, attests to the conceptual connection between them. Furthermore, the offering of Isaac alludes to the sacrificial cult in the Jerusalem Temple.[133] The lulav and ethrog, which are associated with Sukkot, a festival commemorating the desert Tabernacle and the consecration of the Jerusalem Temple, reinforce the connection between these panels.[134] After the destruction of the Temple, the Feast of Tabernacles became associated with messianic expectations surrounding the rebuilding of the Temple.[135] Weitzmann and Kessler note that the eschatological significance of the paintings on the Torah Shrine is expressed by the light blue background representing the sky (and hence celestial iconography) and the gold colour of the menorah, lulav, ethrog, and Temple building.[136] In other words a scene showing the consecration of the wilderness Tabernacle with Aaron is located to the left of the Torah Shrine, and the Jerusalem Temple and sacrificial cult are represented with clear eschatological undertones on the Torah Shrine itself (Figs. 2, 3).

A third panel depicting a temple building (WB 3) completes this sequence, as Kraeling observed: "[it] balances the corresponding panel

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[131] The arrangement of intersecting horizontal and vertical themes is a characteristic feature of other religious buildings at Dura, as Kraeling (1956) 215 observed: "there have already been pointed out the analogies to the use of register divisions that exist at Dura in the Temple of Bel, in the Temple of Zeus Theos, and in the Christian Chapel. In these shrines the horizontal register division also gives way at one point to a vertical element; namely, the painted cult image of the god or his representative, which usually occupies the entire rear wall of the naos".

[132] For a discussion of these images, see Kraeling (1956) 56–62.

[133] For the connection between the offering of Isaac and the sacrificial cult, see Irshai (2004) 93, n. 66.

[134] For the lulav and ethrog as symbols of Sukkot, the Tabernacle, and the Temple, see Kühnel (1986–87) 147; on 148 she notes the connection between the images of Tabernacle and Temple in these panels.

[135] Kühnel (1986–87) 167.

[136] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 155.

at the left (WB 2), where the inauguration of the Wilderness Tabernacle is shown, with the High Priest performing the sacrifice and the Levites in attendance" (see Figs. 1, 4, 6).[137] The Hellenistic style temple building is shown as if surrounded by a series of 7 crenelated walls, each a different colour (Fig. 6). Although Kraeling recognised the astrological significance of the 7 walls and colours, he identified the building as Solomon's Temple and suggested that the artist's intent was "to portray the city [of Jerusalem] as the capital of a world empire".[138]

Instead, this panel (WB 3) seems to depict the seven heavenly hekhalot (temples) described in Jewish mystical literature of the late Second Temple period and in Hekhalot literature.[139] Elior has noted that "A characteristic feature of the priestly mystical tradition is the multiplication by seven in the heavenly cult of almost every element of the earthly cult once performed in Solomon's Temple, or its visionary transformation in Ezekiel's Merkavah".[140] The Mishnah divides the Temple Mount into 7 domains, each within another, increasing in sanctity as one approaches the Holy of Holies (m. Kel. 1:8–9; Mid. 2:3).[141] The concept of a sevenfold division of time and space (7 days of the week and 7 heavenly hekhalot) is repeatedly expressed in Jewish mystical literature, for example the Sefer Yetsira (4:3): "Seven directions and the Holy [seventh] Sanctuary [*heikhal*] precisely in the center, and it supports them all".[142]

Thus, these three panels depict the following sequence from left to right (Figs. 1, 3, 2, 4): the wilderness Tabernacle with Aaron (WB 2); the Jerusalem Temple and sacrificial cult (on the arch of the Torah Shrine); and the heavenly hekhalot in which the angels minister until the restoration of the earthly Temple (WB 3). Furthermore, the panel

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[137] Kraeling (1956) 111.

[138] Kraeling (1956) 105, 106 and 108.

[139] Elior (2004) 79, n. 77: "a wall painting on the western wall of the ancient synagogue at Dura Europos portrays a heavenly Temple with seven walls, each behind another, surrounding a central sanctuary; perhaps there is some connection between this 3rd-century depiction and priestly traditions of septuples in the style of Heikhalot literature".

[140] Elior (2004) 77.

[141] Elior (2004) 77.

[142] Elior (2004) 79. Elior notes the unique importance placed on the number seven in Jewish tradition and the importance placed by the mystical tradition on the association of the number (*sheva*) with the word oath (*shevuah*); Elior (2004) 78, n. 76; also see 48, n. 48. Not only were there seven days of creation and hence seven days in a week, but God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai on the seventh day ('On the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud'—Exod. 24:16), reinforcing the connection between the number seven and God's covenant.

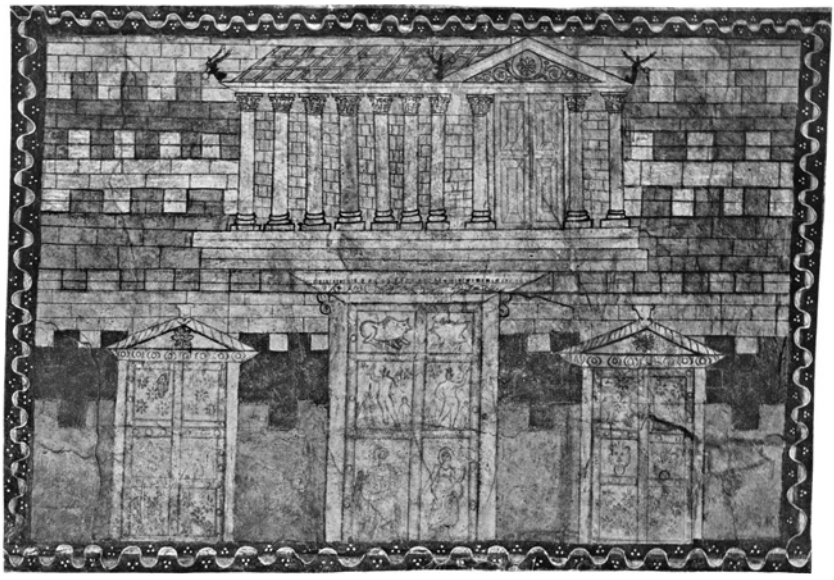

Fig. 6 Painted panel (WB 3) in the Dura synagogue showing a temple building surrounded by seven walls. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. LVII, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

depicting the seven heavenly hekhalot is immediately to the right of the prepared, celestial throne above the Torah Shrine.[143] The panels on and around the Torah Shrine are therefore Temple-oriented (with a strong emphasis on the role of the priests in the sacrificial cult) and mystical, eschatological, and messianic.[144]

Moses figures prominently on the west wall of the Dura synagogue (see Fig. 1): performing the miracle at the well of Be'er (WB 1; see Fig. 3, upper left); as an infant being rescued from the river and brought to Pharoah (WC 4; see Fig. 4, lower right); and parting the Red Sea for the crossing of the Israelites (WA 3; see Fig. 4, upper left). The crossing of the Red Sea has eschatological overtones, since the story of the Exodus from Egypt became the model of national salvation after the destruction of the Temple.[145] In the early Church the

[143] For the interpretation of the throne as celestial, see Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 160–61.

[144] For the association of priests in Late Antiquity with apocalyptic visions, see Irshai (2004) 73.

[145] See Irshai (2000) 124–25 and 133, though on 126 he notes that the Exodus story was not essentially messianic or apocalyptic but did establish a timetable of 400 years for future deliverance.

Exodus was typologically linked with the sacrifice of Isaac, as demonstrated by Melito of Sardis' homily *Peri Pascha* (*ca.* 160).[146] According to an early Jewish tradition (of the late Second Temple period to the 3rd c.), the offering of Isaac occurred on the first day of Passover (shortly thereafter the rabbis changed the date to Rosh Hashanah).[147] If this tradition circulated among the Jews of Dura, it would suggest a thematic link between the panel depicting the crossing of the Red Sea and the offering of Isaac on the Torah Shrine below.

Moses is also represented in the two upper wing panels flanking the central panel over the Torah Shrine (Moses and the burning bush and Moses receiving the Torah) (see Fig. 1, I–IV; Fig. 2). I see no reason why the two figures in the other wing panels—one of whom holds an open scroll—should not be identified as Moses (see Fig. 2, upper right).[148] As Weitzmann and Kessler observed, "the four wing panels of Dura are ideologically closely related to each other and form a unit".[149] The fourth wing panel shows an old man with crossed, veiled hands standing under the vault of heaven (see Fig. 2, upper left).[150] The sun, moon, and 7 stars encircle his head in the heavens above. Kraeling noted that the 7 stars are a problem since the 7 planets usually include the sun and moon instead of being supplementary to them.[151] Furthermore, the clustering of all 7 stars in one part of heaven does not fit the Abraham story, which mentions innumerable stars.[152] If this figure is Moses, the 7 stars could allude to the theophany on Mount Sinai ('On the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud'; Exod. 24:16) or may represent angels. The latter notion was common among ancient Jews and Christians; in fact, Welles identified the stars

[146] Irshai (2000) 125.

[147] See Irshai (2000) 126, who attributes the new rabbinical tradition to "the direct confrontation with the opposing Christian image".

[148] As Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 131 noted, "the association of the scroll with the law had started already with Moses". Kraeling (1956) 234 identified the figure holding the open scroll as Moses or Ezra.

[149] Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 132.

[150] Kraeling (1956) 235. This figure has been the subject of intense speculation. Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 127 noted that "[f]or no other figure or scene have so many different explanations been proposed, including Abraham, Joshua, Moses, and Jacob" (Kessler identifies the figure as Isaiah).

[151] Kraeling (1956) 236.

[152] Kraeling (1956) 127. Kraeling identified this figure as Abraham but other identifications have been proposed: "Those who favor Moses see a reference here to the episodes Deut. 32 and 33, where are recounted the Song and the Blessing that Moses addressed to his people just before the ascent of Mount Nebo, from which he did not return" (Kraeling (1956) 237).

at the corners of the tomb of Christ in the Dura baptistery as angels.[153] Moses' prominence on the west wall at Dura alludes to God's covenant with His people and emphasises the antiquity and authority of Hebrew scripture and Jewish law. His display of the scroll of the law versus the book (codex) of the new law commonly represented in early Christian art reinforces this message.[154]

An Aramaic titulus painted next to Moses in the scene of the burning bush reads 'Moses son of Levi', emphasising his descent from the priest Levi.[155] Levi's appointment as a priest and his special position in the angelic world are described in works such as Jubilees and the Aramaic Testament of Levi.[156] These works grant Levi "a covenant of priesthood for all time and give his sons dominion over the other tribes".[157] In contrast, the biblical tradition did not confer special status on Levi (in the Hebrew Bible Levi's descendant Aaron is considered the founder of the priesthood), and associated him with disgraceful acts such as the slaughter at Shechem and the slaughter after the episode of the golden calf.[158]

Irshai notes that the Babylonian priesthood preserved its status and occupied a leadership position that was recognised even by the Palestinian sages.[159] Aramaic dedicatory inscriptions painted on ceiling tiles leave no doubt about the leadership role of priests in the Dura synagogue:

> This house was built in the year 556, this corresponding to the second year of Philip Julius Caesar; in the eldership of the priest Samuel son of Yeda'ya, the Archon. Now those who stood in charge of this work were: Abram the Treasurer, and Samuel son of Sapharah, and…the proselyte…[160]

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[153] For this concept among the Jews see 3 Enoch 46:2 in Odeberg (1928) 149. For the stars in the baptistery at Dura see Welles (1967) 82–83, though on 170 he states that the rendering of angels as stars is *not* paralleled in the Dura synagogue.

[154] See Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 173, who describe this as a "contrast between Jewish prophecy and Christian fulfilment". Moses can also be understood as a precursor of the messiah, a connection reinforced by the word-play on his name, Moshe/Mashiah; see Weitzmann and Kessler (1990) 170.

[155] Kraeling (1956) 229 and 271.

[156] Elior (2004) 173, n. 26.

[157] Elior (2004) 176. Also see Himmelfarb (2001) 91: "The priesthood is a central concern of Jubilees, and until the generation of Jacob's sons, all of its heroes are depicted as priests. The first man Adam is also the first priest, and from him the priesthood passes through Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Levi".

[158] Elior (2004) 173 and 177.

[159] Irshai (2004) 81.

[160] On Tile A, see Kraeling (1956) 263.

A similar inscription on another ceiling tile (C) apparently referred to Abram the Treasurer and Samuel bar-Sapharah as priests.[161] Kraeling noted that the priest Samuel son of Yeda'ya "more than anyone else represents the community, and in his official capacity as well as in his personal dignity gives expression to its character and purpose… He is a man of high religious station, being proudly referred to as priest in all three Aramaic texts".[162] Samuel's family might be the same one known from the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.[163] He held the offices of presbyter (Aramaic *kashish*; Hebrew *zaken*) and archon.[164] According to Kraeling:

> Samuel's eldership is of such import for the historical and chronological life of the community that it is in effect eponymous, Samuel as Elder being mentioned in one breath, so to speak, with the Emperor Philip Julius Caesar.[165]

Irshai has suggested that apocalyptic and eschatological expectations increased among the Jews of Palestine and Babylonia during Late Antiquity, especially after the failed attempt to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple under Julian the Apostate.[166] Jewish expectations were paralleled by similar apocalyptic anxiety among the Christian population, who anticipated the Parousia.[167] Jewish priestly circles apparently supported and perhaps promoted apocalyptic and eschatological expectations, as the rebuilding of the Temple would have bolstered their leadership position.[168] The rabbis seem to have been ambivalent about such expectations, which if fulfilled would have resulted in the loss of their status (as reflected in their silence about the rebuilding of the Temple under Julian the Apostate and their opposition to mystical practices).[169]

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[161] Kraeling (1956) 268.

[162] Kraeling (1956) 331.

[163] Kraeling (1956) 331; for dedicatory inscriptions by priests in Palestinian synagogues, see Amit (2004) 148–49.

[164] Kraeling (1956) 331.

[165] Kraeling (1956) 331.

[166] Irshai (2000) 142.

[167] Irshai (2000) 151.

[168] See Irshai (2004) 97; also see Goodblatt (1996). Rajak (2002) argues against widespread apocalyptic expectations among Jews in the late Second Temple period.

[169] See Irshai (2004) 97–98, n. 77; Irshai (2000) 143. Irshai (2000) 128–29 notes that some rabbis engaged in eschatological computations, though after the Bar Kokhba revolt they attempted to tone down the messianic fervor. A passage in the Babylonian Talmud cautions: 'Rabbi Shmuel ben Nahmani declared in the name of Rabbi

In conclusion, the catacombs at Beth Shearim and the synagogue at Dura Europus provide evidence of magical and mystical practices among 3rd c. Jews, and indicate that some priests held prominent positions and played leadership roles in Jewish society in Palestine and Babylonia. The iconography of the Dura synagogue suggests that eschatological or messianic expectations circulated among the local Jewish community.

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Jonathan "blasted be the bones of those who calculate the End, for they used to say since the time of his arrival has arrived and he has not come he will never come"' (Tractate Sanhedrin 97b); from Rajak (2002) 166. On 167 Rajak suggests that the rabbis may have disapproved of apocalyptic expectations because of their relationship to mystical speculation, which they tried to limit. Elior and Irshai believe that the priestly apocalypticism of Late Antiquity (as expressed for example in Hekhalot literature) is related to the apocalypticism of the sectarian literature from Qumran; see Irshai (2004) 105.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. Diagram of the painted panels on the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Plan IX, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.
Fig. 2. The area around the Torah Shrine in the centre of the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. XXIV, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.
Fig. 3. South half of the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. XVIII, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.
Fig. 4. North half of the west wall of the Dura synagogue. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. XIX, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.
Fig. 5. Painted panel (NC 1) in the Dura synagogue showing Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of the Dry Bones. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. LXIX, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.
Fig. 6. Painted panel (WB 3) in the Dura synagogue showing a temple building surrounded by seven walls. From Kraeling (1956) Pl. LVII, reprinted with permission of Yale University Press.

ARTISTIC TRENDS AND CONTACT BETWEEN JEWS AND 'OTHERS' IN LATE ANTIQUE SEPPHORIS: RECENT RESEARCH

Zeev Weiss

Abstract

Sepphoris was a major urban centre in the Lower Galilee in the Roman and late antique periods. Architecturally, artistically, and culturally, it was not very different from the pagan cities of ancient Palestine, and its exposure to and assimilation of Graeco-Roman culture did not hinder Jewish life. This article compares the mosaics found in two public buildings constructed in early-5th c. C.E. Sepphoris, the Nile Festival Building and the synagogue, while arguing that these finds may imply close contact between artists working at different locations and for different communities within the city. This phenomenon demonstrates the city's distinct character in Late Antiquity and offers insight into the complexity of the cultural relationship between the Jews and other segments of that society.

In the heart of the Lower Galilee, midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee, lie the remains of the city of Sepphoris, capital of the Galilee for long periods in Antiquity. Through descriptions of Sepphoris in the Roman period, found mainly in Jewish sources, it is possible, to some extent, to reconstruct the city's appearance as well as its spiritual, social, and economic life. However, the number of sources referring to the city in the late antique period is dramatically lower. Both literary sources and archaeological finds indicate that the city's population also included pagans and Christians living alongside the Jewish population. In what follows, we shall concentrate on two contemporaneous buildings constructed in early-5th c. C.E. Sepphoris, through which we hope to demonstrate the cultural relationship and scope of influence of the various ethnic groups residing in the city in Late Antiquity. In order to place the two structures in their urban context, our study will open with a brief description of the city and its architectural development from the Roman period to Late Antiquity.

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(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), pp. 167–188

Sepphoris—The Development of the City in Antiquity

Sepphoris in the Hellenistic period was restricted to the acropolis and its slopes.[1] Early in the 2nd c. C.E., the city expanded considerably eastward, boasting an impressive network of streets arranged in a grid, with two colonnaded streets (about 13 m wide), the *cardo* and the *decumanos*, intersecting at its centre (Fig. 1).[2] Some of the new streets east of the acropolis seem to have been connected to the ones existing on the hill itself and to those continuing beyond the city limits, thereby linking Sepphoris with its agricultural hinterland and the interurban roads. Various public and private buildings were erected throughout the Roman city; among those public buildings known today are a forum, bathhouses, a theatre, and a monumental building identified as a library or an archive.

The city grew significantly in Late Antiquity, having sustained damage in the mid 4th c. C.E. that was most probably incurred during the earthquake of 363 C.E. It has become evident that Sepphoris' centre, which shifted in the Roman period to the Lower City, expanded in the course of the late antique period and even experienced an extensive building boom and a flourishing revival.

The network of streets and roads established in the Roman period continued to be used in Late Antiquity despite some modifications in the urban plan. The porticoes along the colonnaded streets were renovated and adorned with mosaics which included three medallions of different sizes containing dedicatory inscriptions recording that the renovation was carried out in the days of Eutropius, the bishop of the city.

Several buildings dating to the Roman period also continued to be used in the next period; some were reconstructed (such as the theatre and the bathhouse) while others (the forum, city archives, and the House of Dionysos) ceased to function. Moreover, new buildings were constructed adjacent to the central colonnaded streets and elsewhere in the city, including the Nile Festival Building east of the *cardo* and the synagogue in the northern part of the city (to be discussed below), both dating to the early 5th c. C.E. An open plaza with shops and

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[1] Meyers (1999) 109–22; Meyers (1998) 343–55.

[2] For a full description of the finds from Sepphoris, see Netzer and Weiss (1994); Weiss and Netzer (1996) 29–37; Weiss and Netzer (1997A) 117–30; Weiss and Netzer (1997B) 2–21.

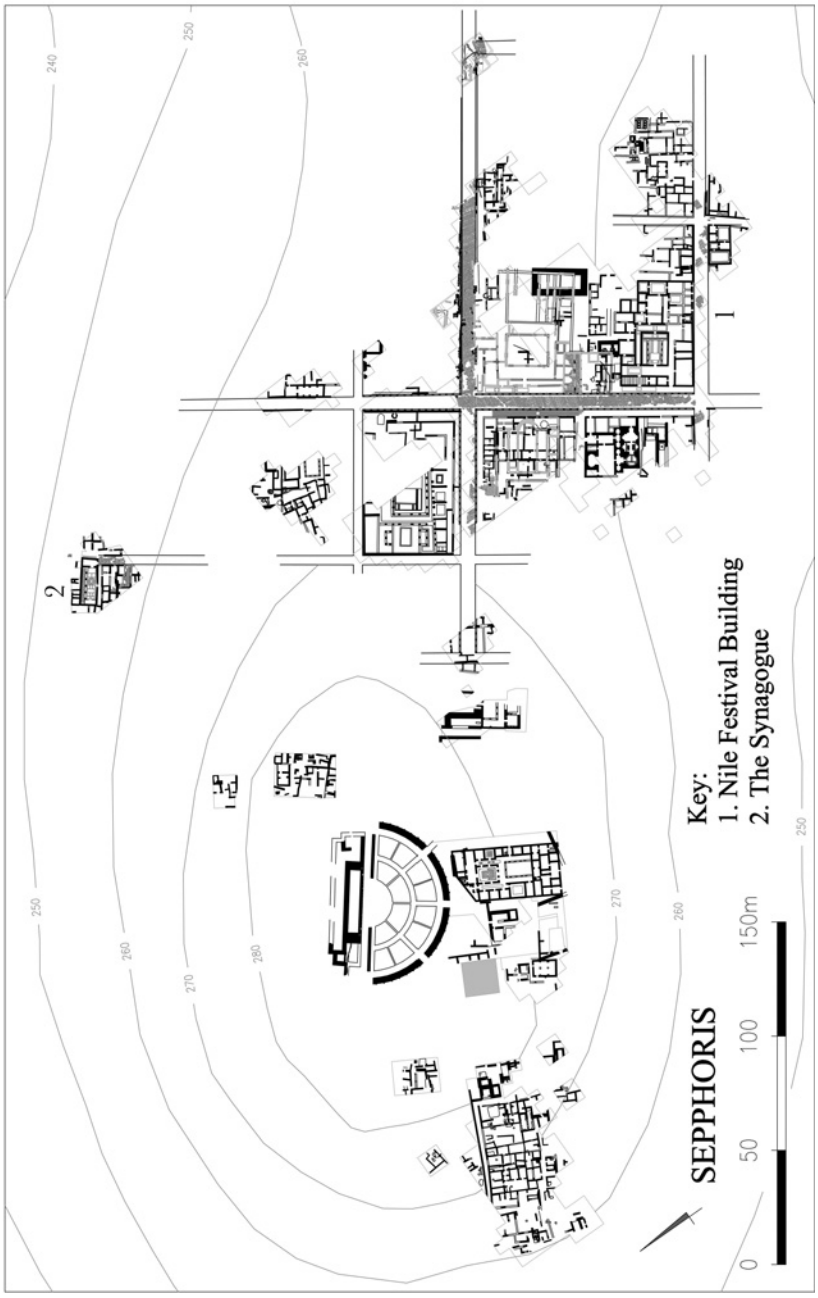

Fig. 1 Sepphoris, plan of site.

colonnades was built over the ruined eastern bathhouse lying north of the Nile Festival Building. Another bathhouse constructed in this period was partially unearthed on the eastern side of the destroyed forum, thus concealing the earlier building.[3] Two churches dating to the late 5th or early 6th c. C.E. have been partially excavated along the *cardo*, close to the intersection of the two main colonnaded streets. They represent the latest construction phase in the city in the late antique period, most probably in the time of the bishop Eutropius mentioned above.

Sepphoris retained its urban plan throughout Late Antiquity, although we lack sufficient data to determine when and how the city declined, how its magnificent buildings were destroyed, and when its population dwindled. The city reached a nadir in the Early Arab period: structures were abandoned and destroyed, earlier masonry was looted, and simple and starkly decorated buildings were constructed across the site.

The archaeological finds unearthed at Sepphoris in recent years provide us with a vast amount of information about this multifaceted urban centre and allow us to draw conclusions regarding the city's demographic composition and the cultural relationship between the various communities residing there in Late Antiquity. In the early 4th c. C.E., the church father Eusebius, who lived in Caesarea, described Sepphoris as a large city populated by Jews.[4] This is undoubtedly an overstatement, since both the talmudic sources and the archaeological and numismatic finds bear witness to a significant presence of both pagans and Christians in the first few centuries C.E.[5] Christianity's penetration into Sepphoris in the late 5th and 6th c. C.E. had a marked effect on the composition of the city's population, yet its Jewish community continued to constitute a relative majority throughout the late antique period.[6]

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[3] Strange *et al.* (1999) 122–28.

[4] Eusebius, *History of the Martyrs in Palestine* (ed. and transl. W. Cureton [1861] 29).

[5] Safrai (1982) 145–58; Miller (1984); Meyers (1997) 57–66.

[6] Two synagogues and possibly a third, all dated to the 5th c. C.E., are presently known at the site (Weiss [2005] 2–4), whereas the two churches unearthed there are dated to the late 5th-early 6th c. C.E. Other than the architectural changes in the city caused by the mid-4th c. C.E. earthquake, the various houses exposed at the site even contain ritual baths and exhibit minor evidence for some changes in the residential dwellings. According to Dan, the Jews continued to constitute an ethnic majority in the Galilee during the late antique period; see Dan (1984) 24–28. The small number

The architectural layout of Sepphoris, including its various public and private buildings, is of extreme value for understanding the city's demographic composition and developments in Late Antiquity. However, it is the many rich and colourful mosaics in the city that vividly imbue our discussion while broadening our horizons regarding the contemporary cultural crosscurrents. Over sixty mosaics from the 3rd to 5th c. C.E. have been uncovered so far in Sepphoris' public and private buildings.[7] In order to demonstrate the city's distinct character in Late Antiquity and to gain insight into the complexity of the cultural relationships between the Jews and other segments of that society, we will focus on two early-5th c. C.E. buildings constructed in Lower Sepphoris: the Nile Festival Building and the synagogue.

The Nile Festival Building

The Nile Festival Building, located east of the *cardo* and opposite the bathhouse, had a somewhat irregular plan in which little attention was paid to symmetry (Fig. 2).[8] Its overall layout resembles an elongated rectangle measuring *ca.* 50 × 35 m. The building appears to have had at least two entrances; the one in the west faced the main colonnaded street and led into an open courtyard. An eight-line inscription set within a mosaic floor on the sidewalk in front of the western entrance mentions a certain Procopius and his son-in-law Patricius. According to Leah Di Segni, these were the artists who created the mosaic or, as Glen Bowersock has recently suggested, the former was governor of Palaestina Secunda and the latter married his daughter and owned the building.[9] A second entrance on the northern side of the building,

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of churches and their distribution throughout the lower Galilee, compared to their heavy concentration in the western Galilee, may also suggest that the Jews were able to maintain a relatively predominant population at this time; see Aviam (1999).

[7] For a description of the mosaics from Sepphoris, see Netzer and Weiss (1994); Roussin (1996) 123–25; Weiss and Netzer (1997B) 2–21; Weiss (2003) 94–101; Talgam and Weiss (2004) 47–123.

[8] Netzer and Weiss (1995) 166–71; Weiss and Talgam (2002) 55–61.

[9] Di Segni (2002) 91–97; Bowersock (2004) 764–66. See also Di Segni (2005) 781–84 (response to Bowersock). Although Bowersock's reading seems reasonable at first glance, his conclusions regarding the function of the building and its date contradict the archaeological finds entirely; see Weiss and Talgam (2002) 58–61. No feature characteristic of a private dwelling, e.g., a triclinium, kitchen, bath, or any other

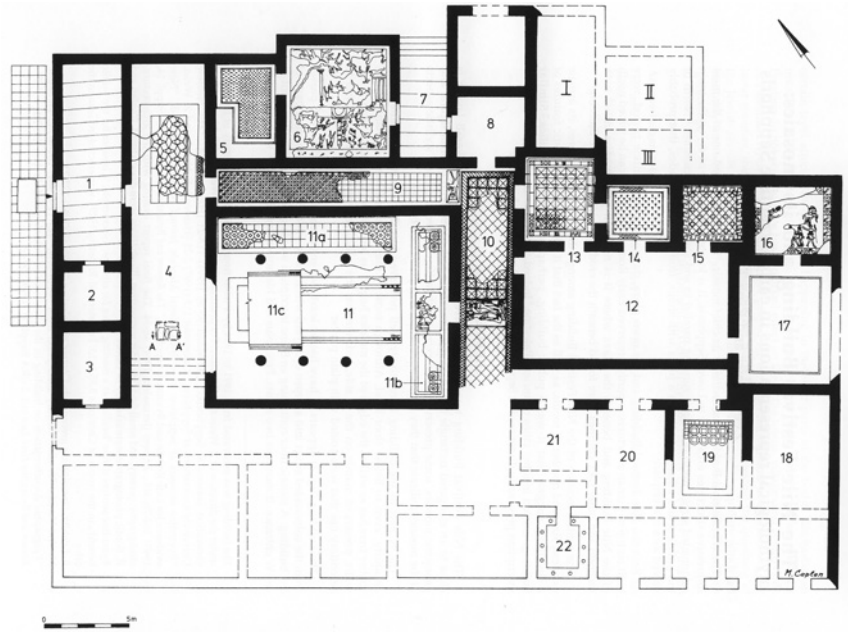

Fig. 2 The Nile Festival Building, plan.

near the room containing the Nile Festival mosaic, also led into a small courtyard that gave access to other parts of the building.

The Nile Festival Building may be divided into two wings. The centre of the western wing contains a basilical hall (15 × 10 m) flanked by corridors on all four sides (Fig. 2, no. 11); the largest and most important room surrounding this hall was paved with the Nile Festival mosaic (Fig. 2, no. 6). The eastern wing included an inner courtyard (Fig. 2, no. 12) surrounded by rooms of various sizes, one of which has survived and served as a latrine (Fig. 2, no. 22).

The building's central location in the city, its artistic richness, size, and numerous rooms, as well as the fact that it exhibited no features

installation, was found inside the building to indicate that it was a private house that was supposedly owned by the daughter of the governor. On the contrary, the Nile Festival Building includes many different-sized rooms arranged in units to suit communal use. The pottery sherds and many coins found in the soundings conducted inside and outside the building clearly indicate that it was constructed in the early 5th c. C.E. and by no means a century later. Not only do these finds support the suggested date, but the construction of the building in this period also corresponds with the general development of the civic centre in Lower Sepphoris.

characteristic of a private dwelling, indicate that this was a public building, perhaps a municipal basilica. Such a structure is mentioned in late antique sources as the place where town meetings, discussions, lectures, and other public gatherings were held. According to Choricius, a similar building was constructed in Gaza in the 6th c. C.E., and this type of structure is known to have existed in other towns of ancient Palestine as well.[10] It is thus probable that Sepphoris also had a municipal basilica.[11]

The entire building was paved with mosaics, some of which are very well-preserved. Several rooms contained figural mosaics, but most of them, as well as the corridors, featured geometric designs displaying a particularly rich array of patterns and an exceptional variety of colours.[12] In some cases, figurative panels were incorporated within geometric carpets. One panel, located in the central part of the building, depicts two figures riding on galloping horses—a huntress (probably an Amazon) and a male warrior (Fig. 2, no. 11b).[13] The huntress and warrior appear to have killed a lion and are attacking a panther chased by a hunting dog. Additional panels were inserted in the geometric mosaics decorating the corridors north and east of the basilical hall; one depicts a centaur rearing on his hind legs, and the other portrays two naked hunters standing beside a tree, with a wild boar at their feet.

The mosaic floors in other rooms were decorated entirely with figurative designs, one partially preserved and another complete.[14] Amazons are depicted in the partially preserved mosaic decorating the north-eastern room of the building (Fig. 2, no. 16),[15] but the Nile Festival mosaic remains the largest and most important one to have been found there (Fig. 2, no. 6).[16] The floor (6.7 × 6.2 m) features a combination of Nilotic and hunting scenes. The upper central part depicts

[10] Foerster and Richtsteig (1929) 55.

[11] A civic basilica is mentioned in an inscription from Sepphoris and might be the Nile Festival Building; see Avi-Yonah (1961) 184–87; Di Segni (1999) 157–58.

[12] For further information about the mosaics unearthed in the Nile Festival Building, see Weiss and Talgam (2002) 61–90. On the dependence of these mosaics on the Antiochene tradition, see Weiss (2009).

[13] Weiss and Talgam (2002) 75–76.

[14] Remains of additional floors were found in two other areas, one in the basilical hall and the other south of the north-eastern room of the building containing the mosaic adorned with Amazons.

[15] Weiss and Talgam (2002) 77–80.

[16] Netzer and Weiss (1992) 75–80; Weiss and Talgam (2002) 61–73.

Fig. 3 The Nile Festival mosaic, early 5th c. C.E. (photo: G. Laron).

a Nilometer, upon which a putto standing on the back of another crouched figure carves the letters IZ (= 17) with a hammer and chisel (Fig. 3). The putto's engraving of the number IZ means that the inundation has reached a sufficient level to guarantee a good crop. Two large reclining figures of a man and a woman appear in the upper two corners of the carpet. To the right is a male personification of the Nile River sitting on an animal from whose mouth the Nile's waters issue forth; the semi-clad female figure on the left is the personification of Egypt's fertile soil. The other scenes on the floor are associated with the Nile and Alexandria, and are accompanied by various hunting scenes.

Nilotic and hunting scenes are well known in late antique art both in ancient Palestine and beyond, however the integration of such themes

in one mosaic is unique.[17] Looking at the broader picture, the Nile mosaic from Sepphoris seems to belong to a relatively small group of mosaics that not only depict the flora and fauna of the Nile or focus on a certain scene, but also represent festivals connected with the river's inundation. It should be compared to the most spectacular of these depictions in a mosaic from Palestrina,[18] as well as to the mosaic in the *tepidarium* of the early-3rd c. C.E. bath at Lepcis Magna and the early 6th c. C.E. mosaic at Sarrîn, for example, which also exhibit the ritual procession of the Nile.[19] The mosaic in Sepphoris' Nile Festival Building focuses on the symbolic announcement of the river's water level reaching a certain mark on the Nilometer, as well as on various hunting scenes. Such a rich and varied combination of motifs in one floor is quite uncommon in late antique art and may indicate the free approach adopted by the artists who designed this floor and selected its elements.

The mythological themes in the Nile Festival Building's mosaics show no indication of having a particular iconographic program, and there is nothing expressly pagan in the way they are used. Some mosaics reflect pagan ritual and exhibit a total lack of religious concern, such as the figures of the god of the Nile and his consort, which are merely personifications of the land's fertility and abundance. The choice of scenes reflects a preference for exotic and even erotic illustrations, some in remote geographical settings. The artists of the Nile Festival Building tried to revive the sensual quality of the Classical nude, contrary to the prevalent trend in late antique art to neutralise this figural style. The assortment of themes originating in pagan art and selected to decorate the Nile Festival Building clearly corresponds to the level of popularity that such subjects enjoyed in late antique secular art.[20] Thus, the assumption that the Nile Festival Building was a major civic structure leads one to believe that these mosaics were not a marginal cultural trend in late antique society but rather the mainstream of art at the time.

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[17] See, for example, Hachlili (1998) 106–20; Whitehouse (1979).
[18] Meyboom (1995) 20–79.
[19] Foucher (1965) 137–41, fig. 1; Balty (1990) 60–68, pls. XXX–XXXIII.
[20] Weiss and Talgam (2002) 80–83; Talgam (2005) 1131–41.

The Synagogue

Located in the northern part of the city, the synagogue was constructed not long after the Nile Festival Building and was in use until the early 7th c. C.E. It is an elongated building (about 7.7 × 20.8 m) facing away from Jerusalem, with an entrance in its southern wall. The single aisle on the northern side of the main hall distinguishes it from most ancient synagogues.[21]

The mosaic floor in the main hall is the most significant remnant of the synagogue (Fig. 4). It was designed as one long carpet measuring 16.0 × 6.6 m and features figurative motifs, whereas the mosaic in the aisle bears geometric designs containing several Aramaic dedicatory inscriptions. The carpet in the main hall is divided into seven horizontal bands of unequal height, some of which are subdivided. The fourteen panels of the mosaic contain a variety of decorations that will be briefly described below. Dedicatory inscriptions, mostly in Greek, adorn the panels but bear no relationship to the scenes appearing in them.[22]

The upper half of the first band was completely destroyed as a result of the looting of the *bema*'s stones. The section that survives depicts a stylised wreath with a Greek dedicatory inscription flanked by two lions; each grips the head of a bullock in one of its front paws. An architectural façade, flanked on either side by a menorah, a bowl containing the four species, a *shofar*, and tongs, appears in the middle of the second band. An incense shovel is depicted below the façade. Motifs related to the Tabernacle or Temple are presented in the third and fourth bands. Aaron's consecration to the service of the Tabernacle (Exod. 29) illustrating the third band comprises three scenes, to be viewed from right to left: a water-filled basin; a large altar with the mostly destroyed figure of Aaron beside it; and a presentation of sacrifices. The last scene continues in the left panel of the fourth band, where the perpetual sacrifice, offered daily in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple, is depicted. The other two panels in the fourth band present other aspects of the Temple cult. The showbread table is depicted in the central panel, and to its right is a wicker basket containing the first fruits. The zodiac in the fifth band is designed as

[21] Weiss (2005) 7–53.
[22] Weiss (2005) 55–161.

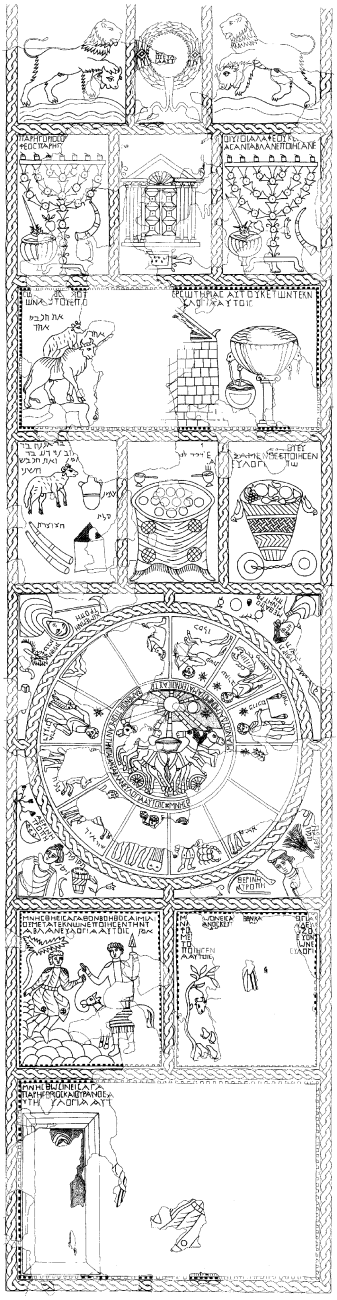

Fig. 4 The synagogue, drawing of the mosaic carpet in the central hall (drawing: P. Arad).

two concentric circles inside a square. The sun (depicted as a radiate globe, not as the personification of Helios) riding a chariot drawn by four horses occupies the inner circle; the twelve signs of the zodiac are portrayed in the outer circle. A youth and a star accompany most of the signs; the youth usually wears a cloak that covers the upper part of his body. The names of the zodiac signs and their respective months appear in Hebrew. Personifications of the four seasons accompanied by Hebrew and Greek inscriptions are represented in the corners of the square delimiting the zodiac's outer circle. Several artefacts beside them symbolise the agricultural activities of each season. The last two bands (6 and 7) portray scenes connected with Abraham. The story of the Binding of Isaac is depicted in the sixth band, and the visit of the three angels to Abraham at Elonei Mamre, largely destroyed, appears in the last band, near the entrance to the synagogue hall.

The diverse motifs and iconographic richness assign this mosaic an important place in Jewish art. An analysis of the structural layout and depictions incorporated in the Sepphoris synagogue mosaic indicates that it was to convey the message of God's promise to the Jewish people and their hope for future redemption. This idea, which also appears in Jewish prayers, rabbinic sermons, and liturgical poetry (*piyyut*), was intended to transmit, for the first time through art, a clear message to the community about the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple and the coming redemption.[23] These themes may be understood in light of the Judaeo-Christian controversy over who were the true Chosen People that reached a new peak when the mosaic was created. The controversy stemmed from the centrality of the Bible—the ancient text recognised and revered by Jewish and Christian communities alike and whose vested authority was undisputed by both.[24] The Sepphoris mosaic thus focuses on the main themes that characterised the contemporary Judaeo-Christian controversy and simultaneously served as a Jewish response, via the biblical stories, claiming that the Jews are the Chosen People.[25]

[23] Wilken (1992) 141–42; Neusner (1987) 59–80; Horbury (1981) 143–82.

[24] Simon (1986) 169–73; F. Segal (1986) 162–81; Horbury (1998) 200–25; Hirshman (1996) 13–22.

[25] Weiss (2005) 225–62.

Art and Artisans, and the Diffusion of Iconographic Motifs among the Communities of late antique Sepphoris

The two buildings discussed above were constructed more or less in the same period, the early 5th c. C.E. Each served a different purpose and was decorated with colourful mosaics containing an array of depictions that did not necessarily resemble those found in the other. However, a comparative analysis of various motifs in these mosaics reveals that they indeed bear iconographic and stylistic similarities. What, then, can one learn about the relationship between the artists who created the mosaics in both places? Could they belong to a single workshop active in early-5th c. C.E. Sepphoris? Does it imply anything about the relationship between Jews and non-Jews residing alongside each other in the same city, or do these similarities simply reflect a relatively common practice that has no implications for the cultural behaviour or social connections between these communities in late antique Sepphoris?

Jewish art in the Second Temple period is characterised by its simplicity; however, from the turn of the 2nd and 3rd c. C.E. we are witness to a dramatic shift toward figurative art.[26] Not only were mere animal or human figures now depicted in synagogues, cemeteries, and even on small utensils in daily use, but pagan motifs also appeared occasionally in Jewish art; e.g. the zodiac, Helios, Odysseus, the sirens, and even Leda and the swan. This trend, noticeable in Roman times, continued well into the late antique period and increased in popularity in subsequent years. The Sepphoris synagogue mosaic, which is embedded with various motifs, subjects, and techniques following patterns known in contemporaneous floors throughout the region and beyond, illustrates well the major trends in Jewish art at this time. The Jews were now familiar with the artistic trends prevailing among their neighbours, and the various communities in the city, most probably supported by local patrons, did not recoil from using pagan symbols in their synagogue mosaics.

The mosaic art at Sepphoris provides us with additional information about how artistic traditions passed between communities in Antiquity. The artist of the synagogue mosaic was familiar with the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building, which may have inspired him when

[26] Levine (2005) 9–26; Fine (2005) 60–123.

Fig. 5 The synagogue, the basket of first fruits (photo: G. Laron).

creating the synagogue mosaic.[27] For example, the shape of the basket of the first fruits (Fig. 5) in the synagogue, its wicker weave, and even its contents resemble the fruit basket on which Aigyptos leans in the Nile Festival mosaic (Fig. 6).[28] Moreover, the youth holding the spear in the *'Aqedah* (the biblical story in Genesis 22 describing the attempted binding, or sacrifice, of Isaac) is reminiscent of one of the hunters in the Nile Festival mosaic even though each grasps their weapon differently. The centaur in Sagittarius (Fig. 7) of the synagogue zodiac parallels the Nile Festival centaur (Fig. 8), and the pair of fish on a hook in the synagogue zodiac are similar to those in the fisherman's hand in the Nile Festival mosaic. In addition, various components in the synagogue floor have stylistic affinities to the mosaic floors in the Nile

[27] Weiss (2005) 169–73.

[28] For details regarding the mosaics in the Nile Festival Building, see Weiss and Talgam (2002) 61–80.

Fig. 6 Aigyptos leaning on a fruit basket in the Nile Festival Building mosaic (photo: G. Laron).

Fig. 7 Sagittarius in the synagogue zodiac (photo: G. Laron).

Festival Building.[29] For instance, the mosaic scenes in both buildings are usually arranged beside each other against a white background, to which landscape features such as a stretch of ground or trees with a few branches were added, but neither the additional details nor the relationship between the figures in the synagogue scenes lend these mosaics true depth or a three-dimensional quality. The stance of some of the human or animal figures, the use of the three-quarter view, and even some of the foreshortened poses in the synagogue mosaic clearly resemble those in the Nile Festival Building, even though they are articulated differently. The facial features—rounded eyes turned to one side and wavy hair highlighted by dark lines—are occasionally rendered identically in both buildings. The round face, eyes, eye-

[29] Weiss and Talgam (2002) 55–90; Weiss (2005) 170–71.

Fig. 8 The centaur in the Nile Festival Building (photo: G. Laron).

brows, and nose of Autumn, for example, resemble those features on the Amazons depicted in the easternmost room of the Nile Festival Building, and the curly hairstyle of the youths in the zodiac signs imitates the hairstyle of the centaur there. The similarities in detail are great, although the resultant quality achieved in the synagogue mosaic is inferior. The mosaicists in both locales followed the same stylistic trend, however the artist executing the mosaic in the Nile Festival Building was obviously more skilled and sophisticated than the artist rendering the synagogue mosaic (as a comparison of Figs. 7 and 8 will show).

The finds from Sepphoris may imply close contact between artists working at different locations and for different communities within the

city. A broader analysis of the finds from Sepphoris and elsewhere in the region may also attest to the existence of a single workshop in the 5th c. C.E. that produced decorations for buildings throughout the city, be they simple or complex, civic or private, secular or religious, or even Jewish, at a time when Christianity played a major role in the region.[30]

An Appraisal of the Archaeological Finds

The various excavations conducted at Sepphoris over the years have unveiled an intriguing picture of this historic capital of the Galilee, which served as the administrative, religious, and cultural centre of Jews both in ancient Palestine and the Diaspora throughout much of the Roman and late antique periods. Some of the archaeological finds, and certainly the literary sources, attest to the Jewish presence in the city. At the same time, the urban layout of Sepphoris, including its Roman-style public buildings, reflect the general urbanisation of ancient Palestine in the first centuries C.E. The various mosaics unearthed at Sepphoris echo a similar phenomenon. On the one hand, they reflect the prevalent iconographic and stylistic traditions known elsewhere in the region in Late Antiquity; on the other hand, the early-5th c. C.E. finds mentioned above exemplify the scope of the influence of Graeco-Roman culture on ancient Jewish art. This is expressed, for example, in the prominence and stylistic character of particular motifs in the synagogue which are reminiscent of depictions appearing in mosaics from the Nile Festival Building in the same period.

A survey of the finds unearthed at Sepphoris—the architectural remains, numerous mosaics, and various objects found at the site—convey the picture of a Hellenised city. Their existence indicates that Sepphoris did not differ architecturally and artistically from other cities in Roman and late antique Palestine.[31] Although we lack conclusive proof that the construction of the various public buildings was initiated, planned, and executed by Jews or that the mosaics were created

[30] Weiss (Forthcoming).

[31] See, for example, Tsafrir (1984) 59–88; A. Segal (1996) 456–62. See also Sartre (2005) 151–205; Butcher (2003) 223–398. For a clarification of the place of the Jewish community in the processes of urbanisation in Roman Palestine, see Oppenheimer (1996) 209–26.

by Jewish artisans, its seems certain that the various buildings known in Sepphoris served the Jewish population, which was the dominant demographic group in the city.[32] This conclusion may seem implausible to some, but why would the Jews refrain from using a colonnaded street, forum, bathhouse or basilica built for the benefit of the citizens of the Roman city, or refuse to adorn their houses with lavish mosaics? The lifestyle of the Jews differed from that of their non-Jewish neighbours, but the actual erection of Roman-style structures did not affect their religious sensibilities. This is articulated in a homily attributed to the rabbis of the Ushan generation (mid-2nd c. C.E.):

> Rabbi Judah commenced the discussion, saying: "How fine are the works of this nation [referring to the Romans]! They have made marketplaces, built bridges, erected baths"…Rabbi Simeon bar Yoḥai answered, saying: "All that they made, they made for themselves—they made marketplaces to set harlots in them, baths in which to refresh themselves, bridges from which to levy tolls"[33]

Rabbi Judah bar Ilai praised Roman building that benefitted not only society but each and every individual, and it seems that Rabbi Simeon bar Yoḥai did not deny the utility of Roman invention, but merely objected to 'the ways of Rome', which used these buildings solely to satisfy its own agenda. Following the destruction of the Temple and the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt, the frustration and anger of certain sectors of the Jewish population in ancient Palestine gave way to a positive approach and to a certain appreciation of Rome and its culture. The understanding that exposure to Graeco-Roman culture was not harmful to the Jewish religion paved the way for absorbing foreign influences in all realms of life. The finds from Bet Alpha and Bet She'arim likewise have opened a window to this multifaceted world through which scholars may recognise changes in the Jewish realm.[34] However, the wealth of evidence emerging in recent years from Sepphoris, one of the key Jewish cities in the Galilee that nurtured the creation of part of the rabbinic literary corpus, offers perhaps our greatest insight into Jewish society and the changing attitudes of the Jews towards the Hellenistic culture with which they lived. These changes, as manifested by the finds at Sepphoris and elsewhere, did

[32] Safrai (1982) 144–79; Goodman (1983) 129.
[33] B Shabbat 33b.
[34] See, for example, Urbach (1959) 149–65 and 229–45; Avigad (1976) 278–87.

not happen overnight or in all strata of Jewish society; rather, it was an ongoing process that intensified in the course of the mishnaic and talmudic periods, reaching a peak in the 5th and 6th c. C.E.[35]

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[35] Herr (1978) 90–94; Herr (1989) 83–106; Levine (1998) 3–32.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. Sepphoris, plan of site.
Fig. 2. The Nile Festival Building, plan.
Fig. 3. The Nile Festival mosaic, early 5th c. C.E. (photo: G. Laron).
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SAMARITAN RESEARCH IN ISRAEL

Shimon Dar

Abstract

Archaeological research into the history and culture of the Samaritans in late antique Israel has increased dramatically in recent decades. The Samaritans, a monotheistic sect that separated from Judaism, expanded from their heartland of Samaria to other parts of Eretz Israel. Their presence has been identified through oil lamps, sarcophagi and synagogues, and this material evidence together with literary sources and new excavations in Samaria and elsewhere has encouraged scholars to develop a better understanding of Samaritan archaeology in Late Antiquity.

Introduction

In recent years, Samaritan archaeology has expanded markedly and has attracted attention from both archaeologists and historians.[1] The new discoveries in the field of Samaritan material culture span over a long period, from the 5th c. B.C.E. until the 7th c. C.E., while the geographical scope of Samaritan material archaeology follows the Samaritans' expansion from the heartland of Samaria to other parts of Eretz Israel. The main waves of this expansion occurred in the Late Roman period (between the 2nd and the 4th c. C.E.) toward the Sharon plain, Mount Carmel, the Bet Shean valley and the large commercial cities along the Mediterranean Sea. The new excavations in these areas which will be surveyed in this paper have greatly increased our knowledge of Samaritan history and culture and have also encouraged scholars to attempt to better define 'Samaritan Archaeology'. The lamp types known as 'Samaritan' most probably originated in the Samaritan heartland in the Late Roman period and offer one possible indicator of a Samaritan site, although such lamps could also have

[1] For an earlier survey of modern research see Pummer (1989).

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), pp. 189–198

been used by non-Samaritans and their existence alone at a given location cannot prove a Samaritan presence. Further analysis has also shed new light on Samaritan sarcophagi and epigraphy, the layout and functions of Samaritan synagogues, and on Samaritan settlement patterns. Nevertheless, the precise identification of Samaritan material culture remains controversial and the definition of a Samaritan settlement should ideally be based on the combined evidence of historical sources and archaeological material culture.

New Discoveries

Among the new discoveries in the study of the Samaritans in Israel, one must include the uncovering of the city and the large sacred precinct on Mount Gerizim. The sacred precinct, with a temple to the God of Israel in its centre, was built during the Persian Period (5th c. B.C.E.). The nearby Samaritan city was first built in the 3rd c. B.C.E.; it reached about 100 acres at its peak and became the capital of the Samaritan community.[2] The Hasmonean John Hyrcanus conquered and destroyed Mount Gerizim in 112–111 B.C.E., as part of the severe schism between the two Israelite communities whose precise background is still unclear. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the historic differences between Jerusalem and Shechem were intensified by economic and social differences between the returnees to Zion and the inhabitants of the north who had not been exiled. According to the excavator of Mount Gerizim, Yitzhak Magen, part of the sacred precinct was rebuilt during the 4th c. C.E., but was destroyed by the emperor Zeno in 484 C.E., when the church of Mary Theotokos was built within the site.

About four hundred inscriptions carved into masonry and paving stones were found within the Samaritan sacred precinct, written in ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and in the Samaritan script, which the excavator attributes to the 6th–12th c. C.E. The inscriptions mention 'the temple' and the name of YHWH, God of Israel. Based on the epigraphic finds, however, the scholars researching Mount Gerizim concluded that scripts alone cannot be used as a criterion for differentiating between Jews and Samaritans.

[2] Magen *et al.* (2004) 1–34.

In recent years, funerary inscriptions discovered in Jatt, on the border between the Sharon plain and the Samaria foothills have also been published.[3] The inscriptions, from various burial caves, include an onomasticon of Hebrew, Greek and Roman names, including some that were common during the Herodian period. The use of the caves reveals different stages, the earliest from the 1st and 2nd c. C.E., the latest from the 3rd to 5th c. C.E.

Based on the script and on the Hebrew names, the excavators originally believed that in the earlier stages the caves were used by Jewish families, while at a later stage they belonged to Samaritan families, as attested by the Late Samaritan oil lamps found in the caves.[4] However, following the discoveries on Mount Gerizim, some of the excavators now believe that it is impossible to know if the deceased were Jews or Samaritans. The few inscriptions in the Samaritan script, which the epigraphers attempted to date to the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods (2nd–4th c. C.E.), performed a protective role, as a sort of charm, mostly in areas that were outside the Samaritan territory.[5]

Samaritan Synagogues

The remains of about a dozen synagogues in Israel today are attributed to the Samaritan community.[6] Most are located in Samaria, a few outside that area. Among the new finds in Samaria and Mt. Carmel, we should count the remains of the synagogues at Neapolis, el-Khirbeh, Khirbet Samara and Raqit in the Carmel range.[7] According to Yitzhak Magen, who excavated the synagogues in Samaria, they were constructed during the time of the Samaritan leader Baba Rabba, during the 3rd and 4th c. C.E., as a reaction to the spread of Christianity in Samaria, and at a time in which paganism had lost its strength in Palestine. The synagogue at Khirbet Samara was built over a pagan public cult building, showing the strength of the Samaritan community at that time.[8]

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[3] Porath, Yannai and Kasher (1999) 1–78; Masarwa (2004) 29–31; Said (2004) 31–33.

[4] For a survey of the evidence for Samaritan oil lamps see Sussman (2002).

[5] Hamitovsky (2004) 150–54.

[6] Magen (2002B) 382–443.

[7] Dar (2004) 120–51.

[8] Magen (2002A) 222; (2002C) 413–28.

At el-Khirbeh and at Khirbet Samara, coloured mosaic floors were found, wonderfully decorated with ritual objects, geometric patterns and floral and natural motifs. At Khirbet Samara, the mosaic depicts the façade of a temple or of a holy ark, with four Ionic columns, a gable with a conch and a door half-covered by a curtain. Might this be a depiction of the Samaritan temple, which stood in the sacred precinct on Mount Gerizim? The el-Khirbeh synagogue stands within a Samaritan country estate, an interesting phenomenon which has also been observed in the Carmel range.[9] The built-up areas of the country estate occupy about four acres and include service buildings, a large oil press and six ritual baths. The synagogue is built on the outskirts of the estate, similar to the one at Raqit on the Carmel range.

The synagogue at el-Khirbeh was constructed in part with stones taken from a 1st or 2nd c. C.E. Roman-style mausoleum that stood on the estate. It is possible that the estate and the mausoleum belonged to a wealthy Roman citizen from Neapolis or Sebaste and was then purchased by a wealthy Samaritan who used the stones of the mausoleum to build the synagogue. But it is also possible that the estate belonged to a Samaritan family that had adopted some Hellenistic and Roman burial customs during the Roman period, and that during the Baba-Rabba renaissance the mausoleum was abandoned and its stones were used to build the synagogue. The finds from Neapolis and Sebaste show that wealthy Roman-era Samaritans commonly used mausolea and sarcophagi.[10]

At Raqit on the Carmel (Arabic *Ruqtiyya*), a large estate of the Roman and late antique periods was excavated; a synagogue was added to the site during the late 3rd or early 4th c. We named the estate after Marinus, whose name was carved over the entrance to a hewn burial chamber.[11] In the synagogue, a simple but fine mosaic floor included a medallion with a Greek inscription concerning God's oneness and His aid to the faithful.[12] The synagogue was abandoned in the mid-5th c. C.E., and the mosaic floor with the sacred inscription was not destroyed but carefully covered with a layer of earth and stone slabs for safekeeping. The Raqit archaeological expedition assumed that its abandonment was connected to imperial anti-Samaritan legislation or

[9] Magen (2002B) 258; (2002C) 399–413.
[10] Damati (1985–1986); Barkay (2002) 334.
[11] Dar (2004).
[12] Di Segni (2004) 196–97.

to violent events that followed such legislation. After about three generations of abandonment, the settlement at Raqit was renewed, but the identity of the new inhabitants is unclear; the Marinus family may have returned to their patrimony, or the site may have been occupied by new settlers, connected to the imperial government. The synagogue was never reused as such.

The attribution of the Raqit estate and synagogue to Samaritan owners is not beyond doubt, and its owners may have been Jews. But the accumulated archaeological data points in the Samaritan direction. Leah Di Segni believes that the text that was inscribed on the floor of the synagogue would be more at home in the Samaritan world than in that of the other faiths that coexisted in Palestine at that time. No foreign imported ware or bones of forbidden animals were found at Raqit, which shows how careful the Samaritans were in fulfilling the commandments of the written Torah. The excavators of the city and the sacred precinct at Mount Gerizim discovered a similar phenomenon.[13] From an architectural point of view, the synagogue at Raqit is similar to those found in Samaria, rectangular structures with benches along the walls, facing Mount Gerizim.[14]

The rural synagogues of the Jewish and Samaritan communities still demand intensive study, but the very fact of their appearance at relatively modest rural sites testifies to their importance in the lives of those communities. It is not surprising that it is not always possible to tell if a synagogue is Jewish or Samaritan. The Jews and the Samaritans were two communities within one nation, the nation of Israel, and worshipped the same Torah.

Samaritan Settlements

The written sources and recent archaeological research make it possible to cautiously trace the limits of Samaritan settlement, over about a thousand square kilometres in the central and northern hill country of Samaria. This territory reaches from Jenin in the north to the trans-Samaria highway in the south,[15] parallel to the Shiloh stream.

[13] Magen (2002A) 213.
[14] Magen (2002C) 433–37.
[15] Magen (2002B) 271.

Within this area it is possible to list close to two hundred rural settlements from the Roman and late antique periods,[16] although by no means all these settlements were necessarily Samaritan. There were also settlements with Samaritan communities elsewhere, especially in the Sharon and Carmel regions, and, beginning in the Late Roman period, in other areas as well, with concentrations in the Beth-Shean area, the Shephelah, the coastal plain and the coastal cities.

Few churches have been found in the Samaritan heartland, whereas south of the Shiloh stream the number of known churches and monasteries increases noticeably, both actual finds and toponyms that include the term '*Deir*', which in Arabic means church or monastery.[17] There are several possible historical explanations for this phenomenon, such as the Samaritan community's rigorous stance against imperial attempts to force them to convert to Christianity, like their Jewish brethren, and the imperial government's seizure of extensive estates in the hills of Samaria. After the enactment of the *Colonatus* Law during the reign of Theodosius I, some Samaritan farmers became serfs on estates belonging to Christians.[18] During the second half of the 4th c. C.E., a more tolerant policy towards the farmers was certainly needed. Farmers who are persecuted because of their religion and their way of life do not generate crops and taxes for the landowners and the government. This is the reason for the relative flourishing of the Samaritan community during the late antique era, as seen in the archaeological record from Samaria, the Sharon and the Carmel. When the imperial government's tolerant attitude towards non-Christians changed, mainly during the 6th c., and it began persecuting them and discriminating against them in all aspects of life, the Samaritan community rebelled with great intensity.

About half a dozen rural settlements identified with the Samaritan community have been examined in Samaria and its foothills,[19] and recently the Marinus estate on the Carmel as well.[20] Each settlement has its own history, and it is not always easy (sometimes even impossible) to distinguish Samaritan settlements from others, because of a lack of archaeological or other means of identification. Only once

[16] Sion (2001) fig. 394.
[17] Tsafrir, Di Segni and Green (1994).
[18] Dan (1976) 190.
[19] Magen (2002A) 225; (2002B) 253–62.
[20] Dar (2004).

the Samaritan community, by choice or by chance, began choosing symbols and developing its own distinctive material culture, could archaeologists attempt to distinguish between Samaritans and others. However, the symbols and the material culture that are now called 'Samaritan' do not pre-date the Late Roman period, and according to scholars they are an outcome of the Samaritans' territorial expansion from their enclaves in the heart of the Samarian hills to other parts of Palestine from the 2nd c. onwards.[21]

The Samaritan rural settlements from Late Antiquity are well built, with a high architectural standard and excellent technical execution. The settlements occupy 5 to 10 acres each; the houses are constructed of hewn local stone and the walls are 0.60–0.90 metres thick, creating good thermal insulation for the summer and winter seasons. The houses have large courtyards with agricultural installations, mostly olive oil presses, nearby, as well as ritual baths, such as those at Kedumim and at Horvat Migdal (Zur Natan).[22] In layout and agricultural practices such settlements differed little between Samaritans, Jews and Christians in this region, making it essential to seek further evidence for possible Samaritan occupation.

At Kedumim, Horvat Migdal, el-Khirbeh, Khirbet Samara and Raqit in the Carmel range, synagogues with special architectural characteristics were found, which, together with remains of material culture such as oil lamps and sarcophagi, make it possible to identify the settlements as Samaritan. It is interesting to note that some of the villages identified as Samaritan, such as Kedumim, el-Khirbeh and Raqit in the Carmel, were originally country estates. This phenomenon is known archaeologically outside the Samaritan areas, but has yet to be fully studied from the historical and agrarian points of view. It would seem that the Samaritan community included several landowners and considerable real estate, in both the Roman and late antique periods. The historical background of the confiscation of Samaritan lands and their handing over to Christian landowners is not sufficiently clear. Procopius describes the Samaritans as serfs on estates owned by Christians, which were destroyed during the intensive revolts of the 6th c.,[23] especially during the reign of Justinian.[24] But almost certainly, not all

[21] Hamitovsky (2004) 202–205.
[22] Magen (2002B) 253–57; Ayalon (2002) 272–88.
[23] Procop. *Anecdota* 11.29; Dan (1976) 204–206.
[24] Di Segni (2002) 454–80.

of the Samaritans were harmed during the revolts and not all were serfs on their own land.

The high quality of Samaritan hill-country agriculture has been observed in surveys and excavations in Samaria, and it enabled the Samaritans to achieve their high standard of material culture, as seen in archaeological excavations. The Samaritan hill-country agriculture, in which other communities who lived in the area also participated, was based on the production of olives and olive oil, vines and wine, field crops and orchards, sheep and other support services.[25]

The agrarian character of the Samaritan heartland, which has been resurveyed in recent years, shows that during the late antique period it was mostly occupied by small villages, estates and farms.[26] Besides Neapolis and Sebaste, which housed the government and the landed aristocracy, no real cities arose in the Samarian hills. This was not because of a lack of land or of favourable geographical features, but rather most certainly because of a decision by the central government to retain the fertile agricultural lands as estates for its own benefit and the benefit of its supporters. It would seem that the precedent for this goes back to the Herodian period, when Herod the Great settled thousands of his veterans in the region of Sebaste.[27] There were also aristocratic families of Samaritan descent in Beth-Shean (Scythopolis) as we know from inscriptions, notably the lawyers Silvanus and Salustius, sons of the lawyer Arsenius the Samaritan, who contributed much for repairs in the city and were of high economic and social standing. Silvanus' son, the younger Arsenius, was a senator and friend of the emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora.[28]

Leah Di Segni has recently proven that most of the Samaritan revolts broke out during the 6th c. C.E., during the reigns of Justinian and Justin II.[29] The revolts that broke out in the rural areas of Samaria arose against a background of extreme religious enmity between Christians and Samaritans and ended in the military subjugation and destruction of many of the Samaritan settlements throughout Palestine, as attested by the archaeological evidence from Samaria and the Sharon plain. However, both the testimony of the Christian

[25] Dar (1986); Sion (2001).
[26] Sion (2004) 194.
[27] Joseph. *AJ* 15.296–97.
[28] Di Segni (2002) 466–67.
[29] Di Segni (2002) 467–80.

pilgrim from Placentia, who visited the Holy Land in 570 C.E. and tells of peaceful Samaritan villages at the end of the 6th c., and the archaeological evidence of a renewal of settlement at sites which had been damaged during the revolts, show that the Samaritan community of the late antique period had a strength and vitality that could overcome the tragedies that befell it.[30]

It would seem that the Samaritan community was harmed mostly after the Muslim conquest, when many were forced to convert to Islam due to continuous social and economic pressure that continued from the Abbasid period through the reigns of the later Mamluk rulers.[31]

We cannot conclude this survey of the latest archaeological research into the Samaritans without citing the interesting results of the genetic research being conducted among the present-day Samaritans by a team of scholars led by Bat-sheva Bonné-Tamir.[32] The examination of genetic links to the community's forefathers points to an unbroken chain of about eighty generations, which fits the traditions of their origins 2000–2400 years ago (assuming 25–30 years to a generation). This discovery lends support to the tradition that the Samaritan community broke away after the Return to Zion, during the Second Temple Period.

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[30] Di Segni (2002) 480; Magen (2002B) 271.
[31] Levy-Rubin (2002) 584–86.
[32] Bonné-Tamir *et al.* (2003).

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ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

THE LIMITS OF THE HERESIOLOGICAL ETHOS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Michel-Yves Perrin

Abstract

A catechumen would be inculcated with a true heresiological ethos intended to arm him or her against the seductions of doctrinal adversaries of the Christian community into which they were now to enter. This was not just about an intellectual 'flight from heresy', but also about renouncing all physical contact with heretics. This study considers the difficulties surrounding the creation of this ethos in the course of the doctrinal controversies of the third to fifth c.

Eusebius of Caesarea relates an interesting story about Origen. As his father had just suffered martyrdom at the very beginning of the 3rd c. A.D., the teenager was taken in by a wealthy woman who 'was very attentive to a man who was famous among the heretics living in Alexandria at that time', an Antiochian named Paul:

> While an immense crowd was gathering around Paul (…) because of his eloquence—not only were there heretics but there were also some of us—, Origen never agreed to join him in his prayers, insisting from his early childhood onwards on preserving the rule of the Church and having, in his own terms, a horror of heretical doctrines.[1]

The point of this anecdote, which is tinged with hagiography, lies in the emphasis that is laid on Origen's precocious compliance with a heresiological ethos that other Christians, from the same Great Church, failed to respect. The tension created, in a Christian context, by these two contrasting standards of behaviour towards the doctrinal enemy is the topic of my paper. For the sake of chronological

[1] Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 6.2.13–14: (…) καὶ τυγχάνει δεξιώσεως ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀναπαύσεως παρά τινι πλουσιωτάτῃ μὲν τὸν βίον καὶ τὰ ἄλλα περιφανεστάτῃ γυναικί, διαβόητόν γε μὴν ἄνδρα περιεπούσῃ τῶν τότε ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας αἱρεσιωτῶν · (…) μυρίου πλήθους διὰ τὸ δοκοῦν ἱκανὸν ἐν λόγῳ τοῦ Παύλου (…) συναγομένου παρ᾽ αὐτῷ οὐ μόνον αἱρετικῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμετέρων, οὐδεπώποτε προυτράπη κατ᾽ τὴν εὐχὴν αὐτῷ συστῆναι, φυλάττων ἐξ ἔτι παιδὸς κανόνα ἐκκλησίας βδελυττόμενος τε, ὡς αὐτῷ ῥήματι φησίν που αὐτός, τὰς τῶν αἱρέσεων διδασκαλίας.

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coherence, I have chosen to confine myself to the period from the beginning of the 3rd c. A.D. to the 430s. The reason for this choice is twofold. On the one hand, the 3rd c. can be considered, from the perspective of a contemporary historian using all available sources, as the starting point for the growing importance of crowds in the history of dogma-related debates. As I have mentioned elsewhere,[2] I take the monarchian crisis at the turn of the 3rd c. to mark the onset of this development. The choice of the closing date of the 430s, is, I must confess, more arbitrary. The death of Augustine and the early years of the Nestorian crisis do not actually mark a new stage in the history of Christian doctrinal conflicts, but these years are characterised by a huge increase in the available data and hence greater difficulty in encompassing phenomena which, more often than not, cannot be comprehended in our primary sources, except through anecdotes or barely mentioned episodes. The historian's task consists in attempting to recapture, in an incidental quotation or a passing reference, some fragments of 'micro-history' that reveal structural phenomena and anthropological homologies that enhance our understanding of the past.

Eusebius of Caesarea underlined Origen's concern that true Christians should not mix with heretics. That message was intended to demonstrate the Alexandrian's faithfulness to the canons of Christian behaviour regarding those who were defined as doctrinal adversaries by the Great Church. Whoever reads the baptismal catecheses of 4th or 5th c. preachers that have been preserved down to our times is bound to be struck by the hazards and the threats that heresy and heretics pose to the catechumens and the newly baptised. In the middle of the 4th c. A.D., the eighteen catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem appeared in the form of a genuine heresiological treatise: one recognises the names of Simon Magus, Cerinthus, Menander, Carpocrates, Ebion, Marcion, Basilides, Valentinus, Montanus, Sabellius and at great length Mani; while, anonymously, the Arians are also mentioned. The function of these catecheses is clearly defined thus:

> You are given weapons against the Adversary's action; you receive weapons against heresies, against Jews, Samaritans, and Pagans. You have a lot of enemies, so receive a lot of ammunition. For you fight many, and

[2] Perrin (2001) 179–85.

> you need to learn how to fell the Pagan, how to fight the heretic, the Jew and the Samaritan.[3]

Right from the start the catechesis is placed under the aegis of a fight against Evil: baptism is, after all, supposed to wrench the neophyte from the power of Darkness, and the exorcisms that mark the catechumen's first steps foreshadow this struggle. The catechesis aims at defining an orthodox doctrinal identity on the dual basis of a *pars destruens* and a *pars construens*. Cyril seeks to define the limits and bounds of the 'Righteous Faith' by emphasising what stands outside it. These outsiders are categorised under the classical trilogy of Jews, pagans and heretics, to which are added here, on account of the local context, the Samaritans. At the same time, it was also necessary to provide the catechumens with the means to defend that 'Righteous Faith'. Epiphanius of Salamis, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom at Antioch as at Constantinople, Nicetas of Remesiana and Augustine of Hippo all offer further evidence of how important doctrinal polemic was, as early as the middle of the 4th c. at the latest, in a catechumen's training.

This insistence on the righteousness of the faith and its contents and on the groups that are said to threaten it is intended to instil into catechumens what, in a speech to his Constantinople congregation in 380, Gregory Nazianzen calls a διαγνωστικὴ ἕξις, 'an ability to distinguish a familiar voice from an alien one'.

> These sheep, he calleth them by name (cf. John 10:3) for they are not anonymous (…), and these sheep follow me, because I lead them to green pastures beside the still waters (cf. Psalm 22.2); they also follow every such shepherd, and look how pleased they are to hear his voice; but "a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him" (John 10:5), because they have, from now on, an ability to distinguish their shepherd's voice from that of a stranger. They will run away from the division of the One into two, as Valentinus taught….[4]

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[3] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Proc.* 10: ὅπλα γὰρ λαμβάνεις κατὰ ἀντικειμένης ἐνεργείας · ὅπλα λαμβάνεις κατὰ αἱρέσεων, κατὰ Ἰουδαίων, καὶ Σαμαρειτῶν, καὶ Ἐθνῶν · πολλοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἔχεις, πολλὰ βέλη λάμβανε. πρὸς πολλοὺς γὰρ ἀκοντίζεις. Καὶ χρεία σοι μαθεῖν πῶς κατακοντίσῃς τὸν Ἕλληνα, πῶς ἀγωνίσῃ πρὸς αἱρετικὸν, πρὸς Ἰουδαίον καὶ Σαμαρείτην ·

[4] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 33.16: Ταῦτα (scil. Τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἐμά) καλῶ κατ᾽ ὄνομα—οὐκ ἀνώνυμα γάρ (…)—καὶ ἀκολουθοῦσι μοι, ἐκτρέφω γὰρ ἐπὶ ὕδατος ἀναπαύσεως · ἀκολουθοῦσι δὲ καὶ παντὶ τοιούτῳ ποιμένι, οὗ τὴν φωνὴν ὁρᾶτε, ὅπως ἡδέως ἤκουσαν · "ἀλλοτρίῳ δὲ οὐ μὴ ἀκολουθήσωσιν, ἀλλὰ φεύξονται ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ", ὅτι διαγνωστικὴν ἕξιν ἔχουσιν ἤδη φωνῆς οἰκείας καὶ ἀλλοτρίας. Φεύξονται Οὐαλεντίνου τὴν τοῦ ἑνος εἰς δύο κατατομήν κτλ.

Gregory thus rejoices in his success in introducing into both the ears and the minds of his audience not only a 'doctrinal susceptibility' but also a genuine heresiological ethos which will shape their behaviour and, at the same time, their faith. All he did, after all, was to stir up an essential disposition that baptismal catecheses endeavour to promote and nurture in every would-be baptised Christian, and which ordinary preaching, as shall be seen later, was designed to maintain and exercise.

In all the instructions delivered to both the catechumens and the faithful, the injunction to 'run away from heretics' rings out distinctly: not only is this a merely intellectual rejection of opinions, ideas or beliefs considered to be wrong, but true believers must protect themselves from any physical contact with the people who champion them. Similarly, Cyril of Jerusalem urges his would-be baptised Christians to renounce the use of astrology or any predictive device, to avoid intemperance, to refuse to attend any entertainment in the society of pagans, to avoid the use of amulets (such as ligatures) in case of illness, to stay away from Judaism and the religion of Samaritans and 'especially to hate the gatherings of criminal heretics'.[5] John Chrysostom, Augustine and Theodore of Mopsuestia say exactly the same thing.[6] Cyril of Jerusalem then goes further and proclaims:

> Let us hate those who are worthy of hate; let us turn our backs on the ones from whom God turns away; let us also tell God about the heretics: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee; and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?" (Psalm 138:21). For there exists some beautiful enmity, as it is written: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed" (Genesis 3:15).[7]

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[5] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 4.37: Φεῦγε δὲ πᾶσαν διαβολικὴν ἐνέργειαν (…). Καὶ μήτε ἀστρολογίαις, μήτε ὀρνεοσκοπίαις, μήτε κληδόσι πρόσεχε, μηδὲ ταίς μυθώδεσι τῶν Ἑλλήνων μαντείαις. Φαρμακίαν, καὶ ἐπαοιδίαν, καὶ τὰ νεκυομαντειῶν παρανομώτατα πράγματα, μηδὲ μέχρις ἀκοῆς παραδέχου. Ἀπόστηθι παντὸς ἀκολασίας εἴδους, μήτε γαστριμαργῶν, μήτε φληδονῶν, ὑπεράνω τε φλαργυρίας ἁπάσης καὶ τοῦ τοκίζειν γενόμενος. Μήτε δὲ θεωριῶν ἐθνικοίς ἀθροίσμασι παράβαλλε · μήτε ἐπιδέσμασιν ἐν νόσοις χρήσῃ ποτέ. Ἀποστρέφου δὲ πᾶσαν καὶ τοῦ καπηλοδυτείν χυδαιότητα. Καὶ μήτε εἰς Σαμαρειτισμὸν ἢ Ἰουδαισμὸν ἐκπέσης · ἐλυτρώσατο γάρ σε λοιπὸν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός. Πάσης σαββάτων παρατηρήσεως ἀπόστηθι · καὶ τοῦ κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον λέγειν τι εἶναι τῶν ἀδιαφόρων βρωμάτων. Ἐξαιρέτως δὲ μίσει πάντα τὰ συνέδρια τῶν παρανόμων αἱρετικῶν. Cf. also 15.33 and 16.10.

[6] John Chrysostom, *Bapt. cat.* 1.24; August., *Serm.* 56.12 and 14; 88.17; 215.9; Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Hom. cat.* 13 *passim*.

[7] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 16.10: μισήσωμεν τοὺς μίσους ἀξίους, ἀποστραφῶμεν οὓς ἀποστρέφεται ὁ θεός. Εἴπωμεν καὶ αὐτοὶ μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης τῷ θεῷ περὶ

Although he refuses to give into hatred, Gregory Nazianzen invites his congregation to move away from his adversaries as they are 'a blemish for the Church and a poison for the Truth'.[8] Such exhortations are no novelty. In the 3rd c. A.D. the *Didascalia of the Apostles*, a book of Syrian origin which deals with canonical and liturgical matters, already forbade any contact with 'heretics': no communication was possible with them, either by word, or through prayer.[9] At the beginning of the 2nd c., as it seems, the author of the Epistle to Titus 3.10–11 gave this advice: 'A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such subverted and sinneth being condemned of himself'.[10] Throughout his correspondence Cyprian of Carthage gives numerous examples of this principle of the excommunication of the adversary[11] and offers an anthology of scriptural *dicta probantia* to support and illustrate it in a letter to one of his fellow bishops in 256:[12] II Corinthians 6:14 ('Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?'); II Timothy 2:17 ('And their word will eat as doth a canker'); and I John 4:3 ('And every spirit that divideth Jesus is not of God and this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that he should come and even now already is it in the world').

The Donatists were the ones who went the furthest in scrutinising the Scriptures in order to extract verses which gave legitimacy to their hostility towards their adversaries. The verses they gathered included: Proverbs 9:18b (in a version inspired from the Septuagint: 'Of an alien water, thou shalt abstain, and from an alien spring thou shalt not

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πάντων αἱρετικῶν · οὐχὶ τοὺς μισοῦντάς σε κύριε ἐμίσησα καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ἐξετηκόμην; ἔστι γὰρ καὶ ἔχθρα καλή, καθὼς γέγραπται · καὶ ἔχθραν θήσω ἀνὰ μέσον σου καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς.

[8] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 36.10: τοὺς δὲ ἄλλο τι φρονοῦντας ἢ λέγοντας, ἢ φύσων μέτροις τὸ ἓν διαλύοντας, ἢ διατειχίζοντας, ὡς λύμην τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἰόν, ἀποπέμποισθε, μὴ μισοῦντες, ἀλλ΄ ἐλεοῦντες τοῦ πτώματος.

[9] *Didascalia Apostolorum* 25. Cf. also 15 and 26. On prohibiting talking to 'heretics', see also Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. haer.* 3.3.4, and Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 6.19 and 33.

[10] *Epistula ad Titum* 3:10–11: αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἁμαρτάνει ὢν αὐτοκατάκριτος. See Le Boulluec (1985) 524 ff., and Augustine's commentary on this scriptural verse (*Ep.* 43.1; cf. *PCBE* 1, Eleusius) in his correspondence with Donatists.

[11] Cyprian, *Ep.* 34.1.1; 41.2.1–2; 42; 43.7.2, etc.; Cyprian, *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* 23: *recedendum est a delinquentibus uel immo fugiendum, ne dum quis male ambulantibus iungitur, et per itinera erroris et criminis graditur, a uia ueri itineris exerrans, pari crimine et ipse teneatur.*

[12] Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.15. 1–2 (see the comment in the edition by Clarke (1984–1989)).

drink'); I Timothy 5:22 ('Neither be partaker of other men's sins'); Isaiah 52:11 ('Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence; touch no unclean thing'); Leviticus 21:4–6 (in an abridged version: 'whoever has touched an unclean thing becomes unclean'); and I Corinthians 5:6 ('Know thee not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?').[13]

The phrase 'no salvation outside the Church' which Origen and Cyprian coined at almost the same time, the former against the Jews, the latter against the 'heretics',[14] and which was to be widely circulated,[15] is here achieved through the rejection of all ritual blemish.[16] The instances of genuine horror at the pollution entailed by any contact with heretics, which Paul Monceaux considered as a particularly Donatist characteristic,[17] are echoed by similar passages from other times or places within the *orbis christianus* of that period. The so-called 'Council of Laodicea' canons, an ecclesiastical body of laws that allegedly appeared in Asia Minor in the second half of the 4th c. or at the beginning of the 5th, not only insist that prayer should not be carried out in common with heretics and schismatics (which implies not attending their cemeteries and martyria), but also that Christians should stay away from their celebrations, turn down their offerings and

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[13] These scriptural references are quoted in a letter from Augustine (*Ep.* 108.1 and 7) to Macrobius, the Donatist bishop of Hippo in the early 410s (*PCBE* 1, Macrobius 2; cf. Lancel (1999) 352 and 416). The same case is also mentioned in *De unico baptismo* 14.24. The quotation, presented as scriptural (*Qui tetigerit pollutum pollutus est*), which refers to Leviticus 21:4–6, seems to be linked to Leviticus 5:2; Numbers 19:22 and Haggai 2:14 (cf. Optatus of Milevis 6.3.1 and 7). The quotation from Proverbs 9:18 (70) finds an echo, as far as its meaning is concerned, in Cyprian, *Ep.* 69.2.

[14] Origen *Hom. in Jos.* 3.5 (*Nemo ergo sibi persuadeat, nemo semet ipsum decipiat: extra hanc domum, id est extra ecclesiam, nemo saluatur; si quis foras exierit, mortis suae ipse fit reus*; see the edition by Jaubert (1960) 142–43, n. 1, who opposes Harnack in defending the Origenian origin of the passage): see Ledegang (2001) 291–302 and 677; Cyprian, Ep. 73.21.2 (*Salus extra ecclesiam non est)*; cf. 55.24.1 *(Quisquis ille est et qualiscumque est, christianus non est qui in Christi ecclesia non est*); 66.2.2; 72.2.3. Cf. Bévenot (1981); Le Boulluec (1985) 482–84. Unfortunately I have not been able to consult M. Kessler, "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus?* Zur Problematik einer Denkfigur", in *Kirche sein. Nachkonziliare Theologie im Dienst der Kirchenreform. Festschrift H. J. Pottmeyer*, edd. W. Geerlings and M. Seckter (Freiburg 1994) 295–331.

[15] See Ratzinger (1971) 145–71; Rahner (1964) 538–47 (on the patristic interpretation of Noah's Ark); Kern (1995).

[16] Douglas (2001) provides an interesting analysis of this concept. Cf. Parker (1983). Penn (2003) has beautifully illustrated this particular outlook by highlighting the role of the acceptance or refusal of the kiss of peace in some cases of division among Christians in Late Antiquity. Cf. Penn (2005).

[17] Monceaux (1912) 171–73. Let it be recalled, once and for all, that Donatists and Anti-Donatists would often condemn each other not only as 'schismatics' but also as 'heretics': see Greenslade (1964) and Tilley (2007).

not marry their offspring.[18] All these provisions result from a deeply rooted jurisprudence whose elements were collected by the great Joseph Bingham in the sixteenth Book of his *Origines Ecclesiasticae*.[19] These conditions follow a principle that, at the beginning of the 5th c., Synesius of Cyrene states with such rare clarity that it makes all gloss redundant: 'The blemish can be passed on from the one to the other, and when one has touched the unclean thing, one incurs the curse of Heaven. Now one must, both spiritually and physically, stand clean before God'.[20]

If the baptismal catecheses that have come down to us do not display all the nuances of the physical rejection of 'heretics' that have just been illustrated, there is no doubt that the anthropological structures that support them were widely shared by people in ancient times whatever their cults or their beliefs. One classical example will be enough. Polybius relates that after the Third Macedonian War and Perseus' defeat at Pydna in 168 B.C., the Achaean politicians (notably the *strategos* Callicrates and his friends) who were in favour of an unconditional surrender to Rome's demands were utterly hated by most of their fellow-countrymen. To support his words, Polybius mentions the following anecdote:

> When the festival of the Antigoneia was being celebrated in Sicyon, and all the baths had their large public bathing-tubs open, and smaller ones next to them, which the more genteel people used to enter privately whenever any of the party of Callicrates and Andronidas went in to them, none of those who were waiting their turn ventured to enter the water after them, before the bath-keeper had let it all run off and poured

[18] *Canons of Laodicea*, c. 6.9–10, 31–34, and 37.

[19] On excluding heretics: *Canons of Antioch*, c. 2; *Apostolic Constitutions* 6.18; 8.47.46; 8.47.65; 8.47.68; Epiph., *De fide* 24.3. On the refusal of offerings from 'heretics' or excommunicated people: Tert., *Adv. Marc.* 4.4.3 (The Roman Church gave Marcion his money back after his excommunication); *Didascalia Apostolorum* 18; *Canons of Elvira*, c. 28. On denying marriage: *Canons of Elvira*, c. 16; *Breviarium Hipponense* (pertaining to the Council of Carthage in 397), c. 12. Cf. Bingham (1845) vol. VII, 16.2–3, and vol. IX, 21.2, of which a very brief but convenient synthesis can be found in Smith and Cheetham (1876) 766–69.

[20] Synesius of Cyrene, *Ep.* 42: Ὁ γὰρ μολυσμὸς διαδόσιμος γίνεται, καὶ ὁ θίγων ἐναγοῦς ἀπολαύει τῆς τροπῆς. Δεί δὲ εἶναι καὶ γνώμῃ καὶ σώματι καθαροὺς τῷ θεῷ. On the event that motivated this declaration by Synesius—the excommunication of Governor Andronikos—see Teja (1997); De Salvo (1998) and Schmitt (1998), all of which were ignored by the editor, D. Roques.

> in fresh. They did this because they considered that they would be, as it were, polluted by entering the same water as those people.[21]

According to a tradition that Irenaeus of Lyons claims to have inherited from Polycarp of Smyrna, the Apostle John does not seem to have behaved very differently towards his adversary, Cerinthus. 'As John, the Lord's disciple, arrived at the baths in Ephesus, he noticed that Cerinthus was inside; so he rushed out of the building, without having bathed, shouting "Let us run away, for fear the baths may collapse, for there inside is Cerinthus, the enemy of Truth"'.[22]

This cutting remark was to remain famous.[23] Theodoret relates that in Samosata, after Eusebius, the Nicene bishop, had been sent into exile under emperor Valens, the faithful refused by all possible means to hold communion with the newly appointed bishop, a man called Eunomius, a good man but one who was hostile to the Nicene Creed.

> On one occasion he had expressed a wish to bathe, so his servants shut the doors of the bath, and kept out all who wished to come in. When he saw the crowd before the doors he ordered them to be thrown open, and directed that everyone should freely use the bath. He exhibited the same conduct in the halls within; for on observing certain men standing by him when he bathed, he begged them to share the hot water with him. They stood silent. Thinking their hesitation was due to a respect for him, he quickly arose and made his way out, but these people had really been of the opinion that even the water was affected with the pollution of his heresy, and so sent it all down the sinks, while they ordered a fresh supply to be provided for themselves. On being informed of this the intruder departed from the city, for he judged that it was insensate

[21] Polyb. 30.29: τῆς γὰρ τῶν Ἀντιγονείων πανηγύρεως ἐν τῷ Σικυῶνι συντελουμένης, καὶ τῶν βαλανείων ἁπάντων ἐχόντων τάς τε κοινὰς μάκτρας καὶ πυέλους ταύταις παρακειμένας, εἰς ἃς οἱ κομψότεροι τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰώθασι κατ᾽ ἰδίαν ἐμβαίνειν, εἰς ταύτας ὅτε τις καθείη τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἀνδρονίδαν καὶ Καλλικράτην, οὐδεὶς ἐτόλμα τῶν ἐφεστώτων ἔτι καθιέναι, πρὶν ἢ τὸν βαλανείτην τὸ μὲν ὑπάρχον ὕδωρ ἀφείναι πᾶν, ἕτερον δὲ καθαρὸν ἐγχέαι. τοῦτο δ᾽ ἐποίουν, ὑπολαμβάνοντες ὡσανεὶ μιαίνεσθαι καθίεντες εἰς ταὐτὸ τοῖς προειρημένοις ὕδωρ. For an archaeological discussion of this passage, see Thébert (2003) 55 n. 36.

[22] Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. haer.* 3.3.4: Καὶ εἰσὶν οἱ ἀκηκοότες αὐτοῦ ὅτι Ἰωάννης ὁ τοῦ Κυρίου μαθητὴς ἐν τῇ Ἐφέσῳ πορευθεὶς λούσασθαι καὶ ἰδὼν ἔσω Κήρινθον ἐξήλατο τοῦ βαλανείου μὴ λουσάμενος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπειτών · φύγωμεν, μὴ καὶ τὸ βαλανείον συμπέσῃ, ἔνδον ὄντος Κηρίνθου τοῦ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐχθροῦ.

[23] See Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.* 3.28.6; 4.14.6; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Haer. Fab. compendium* 2.3. Epiph., *Pan.* 30.24 substitutes Ebion for Cerinthus.

> and absurd on his part to continue to reside in a city which detested him, and treated him as a common foe.[24]

The purpose of these *exempla*—which, to my knowledge, have never been put together before—is to underline both the clear continuity of behaviour in this succession of sources and the strength of the common feeling of repulsion for uncleanness, be it either political or doctrinal. Other testimonies may be called upon here in order to illustrate the power of a sort of in-built διαγνωστικη ἕξις. If, according to her biographer Gerontius, Melania the Younger 'heard that someone was a heretic—or was merely reported to be one—she would exhort them to convert to God'. If the heretic would not allow herself to be persuaded, 'she did not even accept anything from them for helping the poor'.[25] The women whose spiritual adviser was Jerome show a similar attitude. Eustochium, for example, after the Bethlehem monastery had been burnt down in 416, preferred to give up her family wealth and her houses and be sent into an honourable exile, rather than 'be sullied by the communion of heretics'.[26] The

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[24] Theodoret of Cyrrrhus, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.15.2–3: Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ λούσασθαι βουληθέντος οἱ οἰκέται τοῦ βαλανείου τὰς θύρας ἔκλεισαν τοὺς εἰσελθεῖν βουλομένους κωλύοντες, πλῆθος πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν θεασάμενος ἀναπετάσαι ταύτας ἐκέλευσε, καὶ ἀδεῶς τοῦ λουτροῦ τοὺς πάντας κοινωνῆσαι προσέταξε. Ταὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἔνδον ἐν τοίς θόλοις πεποίηκε. Λουομένῳ γὰρ αὐτῷ παρεστηκότας ἰδών, συμμετασχείν τῶν θερμῶν ὑδάτων ἐκέλευσεν· οἱ δὲ σιγῶντες εἰστήκεισαν. Ὁ δὲ τιμὴν τὴν στάσιν ὑπολαβών, θᾶττον ἀναβὰς ἐξελήλυθεν. Οἱ δὲ τοῦ τῆς αἱρέσεως ἄγους καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ μετεσχηκέναι νομίσαντες, ἐκεῖνο μὲν τοίς ὑπονόμοις παρέπεμψαν, ἕτερον δὲ αὐτοίς κερασθῆναι προσέταξαν. τοῦτο μαθὼν ἐκεῖνος ᾤχετο τὴν πόλιν καταλιπών, πόλιν οἰκείν ἀπεχθανομένην καὶ κοινὴν δυσμένειαν ἔχουσαν ἀβέλτερον εἶναι νομίσας καὶ λίαν ἀνόητον.

[25] Gerontius, *Vita Melaniae* 27: ὥστε εἴ τινα κἂν ψιλῷ τῷ ὀνόματι αἱρετικὸν ἤκουεν, εἰ μὲν συμβουλευούση αὐτῷ μεταβαλέσθαι ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον ἐπείθετο <?> εἰ δὲ μή γε, οὔτε εἰς οἰκονομίαν τῶν πτωχῶν λαβείν τι παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ κατεδέχετο. (cf. the Donatists' refusal of Macarius' alms: Optatus of Milevis 3.3.2). In § 28, Melania refuses holy communion because the diptychs of the dead mention a woman who has just died and who is believed to be a 'heretic'. On the other hand, in § 29, Melania converts Samaritans, pagans and heretics by resorting to special gifts and exhortations. In § 44 Melania, then in the middle of the Nestorian crisis, is depicted as exhorting virgins to seek 'orthodoxy' first (cf. Antony's last speech, Athanasius, *Vit. Ant.* 89.4 and 91.4). On Melania, see Giardina (1994) and *PCBE* 2, Melania 2; see also the comments of Laurence in the edition of the Latin *vita*, on pp. 29–76 (the author's conclusion is—on 141— that both the Greek and Latin versions of the *Vita* represent "two recensions that are very probably contemporaneous with the primitive *Vita* of Gerontius". Of the passages examined here, only § 27 differs from the Greek text of the *Vita*). In Cappadocian Caesarea, when emperor Valens attended Basil's mass for Epiphany, nobody helped him to bring his offering to the altar (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 43.52).

[26] See respectively Jer., *Ep.* 108.23–25; 127.9–10; 154.2. See Krumeich (1993); Rebenich (1992) with Duval (1995); Paoli (1994), and especially *PCBE* 2, Paula 1, Marcella 1, and Eustochium.

rigorous Roman priests Faustinus and Marcellinus pay tribute to the *plebs sancta* of Oxyrhynchus and to Hermione, a virgin of Eleutheropolis, who repelled the communion of 'heretics'.[27] Similarly, it is not uncommon to encounter cases in which priests or bishops refuse to be ordained by bishops whose orthodoxy seems suspicious. Aetius refused to be made a bishop by Secundus and Serra as they were suspected of compromising with homoousians, for they had been ordained by homoousians themselves,[28] while the same attitude can be seen among the 'old Nicenes' and their allies in relation to Meletius of Antioch. The Donatist crisis began with the disputed election of Caecilian of Carthage, and the contemporary Melitian schism in Egypt reflected the same concerns. Already at the time of the pagan persecutions, the imprisoned Egyptian Christians are said to have taken care to separate themselves from those among their fellow Christians who did not belong to the same communion. Epiphanius thus relates that Peter of Alexandria hung a coat in his jail to separate his own followers from those of Meletius of Lycopolis, and that when working at the mines the two groups would never receive Communion or pray together.[29]

To these accounts, which may not always be accurate or truthful but which are nonetheless plausible and reflect a generally accepted system of values, some first-hand testimonies can be added which illustrate a similar preoccupation with orthodoxy. The Roman aristocrat Anicia Iuliana, mother of Demetrias, vigorously opposed Augustine and Alypius, who suspected her of having Pelagian sympathies, and she insisted that both her family's faith and her own were righteous:

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[27] Faustinus and Marcellinus, *Libellus precum* 93 and 103. About these events, see Simonetti (1963) 76–77 and Simonetti (2001) 21–24. Cf. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.17.4: During Pope Liberius' exile no one would go to church when Felix, his substitute, officiated.

[28] Philostorgius 3.19; Sozom. 6.38 (the monk Moses refused to be made bishop of the Saracens by Lucius, the anti-Nicene bishop of Alexandria; cf. Rufinus of Aquileia, *Hist. Eccl.* 11.6; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.23.2).

[29] Epiph., *Pan.* 68.3.3 and 9. See Martin (1996) 267–85 (the narrative does not seem totally reliable). Epiphanius' account can be compared with two passages from *Passio Donati* 11.1 (*Nam cum Montanus cum Iuliano habuisset sermones aliquos ob eam mulierem quae ad nostram communionem obrepsit, cui non communicabat, cumque post correptionem quam in eum ingesserat in frigore ipse discordiae mansisset* etc.) and 14.3 (*Haereticorum quoque superbam et inprobam contumaciam retundebat, contestans eos ut uel de copia martyrum intellegerent ecclesiae ueritatem ad quam redire deberent*) which evoke a similar situation of imprisonment and the arguments it raised among Donatist prisoners. In relation to this background one would find it interesting to read the narrative of the martyrdom of Pionios of Smyrna and his companions, see *Martyrium Pionii*.

> Please note that me and my household are very far away from people of that kind. Our family's attachment to the Catholic faith is such that we have never gone astray and fallen into heresy; I am not only speaking of those vagabond sects, but I also mean those that seem to contain only a few minor errors.[30]

Heresiological anxiety also shows itself in correspondence addressed to religious figures who are considered to have genuine authority in the matter of orthodoxy, such as Augustine or Jerome, and in which we find either requests for clarification or reports about some suspicious speech or document.[31] Indeed cases of this kind abound.

All these fragments of 'micro-history' testify to the resonance of a heresiological ethos. For lack of space it is not possible here to give a detailed and comprehensive account of the requirements that defined how this ethos was to be inculcated and perpetually maintained.

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[30] August., *Ep.* 188.3 (Augustine and Alypius quote Iuliana's words): *Sed nouerit sacerdotium uestrum longe me ac domunculam meam ab huius modi personis esse discretam; omnis familia nostra adeo catholicam sequitur fidem, ut in nullam haeresim aliquando deuiauerit nec umquam lapsa sit, non dico in eas sectas, quae uix expiantur, sec nec in eas, quae paruos habere uidentur errores.* The answer of both correspondents is eloquent (§ 10): *de hoc ergo eius affectu utrum non fallamur, inde nos fac potius rescribendo certiores: nam illud optime nouimus cum omnibus uestris cultores uos esse et fuisse indiuiduae trinitatis; sed non hinc solum error humanus obrepit, ut aliquid secus sentiatur de indiuidua trinitate. Sunt enim et alia, in quibus perniciosissime erratur, sicuti hoc est, unde diutius fortasse, quam satis esset uestrae fideli castaeque prudentiae, in hac epistula locuti sumus.* Cf. Prosper of Aquitaine *apud* August., *Ep.* 225.8: *ac primum, quia plerique non putant christianam fidem hac dissensione uiolari, quantum periculi sit in eorum persuasione, patefacias.*

[31] See what Jerome writes (*Ep.* 141) to Augustine: *Catholici te conditorem antiquae rursum fidei uenerantur atque suscipiunt, et (quod signum maioris gloriae est) omnes haeretici detestantur.* We can relate this praise to Jerome's letter (*Ep.* 153) to Boniface, the bishop of Rome (418–22), shortly after his election: *Sentiant heretici inimicum te esse perfidi et oderint, ut a catholicis plus ameris, et executor atque completor sis sententiae praecessorum tuorum nec patiaris in episcopali nomine hereticorum patronos atque consortes.* See also what Augustine writes to Jerome, whom he asks about the question of the origin of the soul (*Ep.* 166.1; cf. O'Connell (1987); Clark (1992) 227–43): *Deum nostrum qui nos vocauit in suum regnum et gloriam, et rogaui et rogo ut hoc quod ad te scribo, sancte frater Hieronyme, consulens te de his quae nescio, fructuosum esse nobis uelit. Quamquam enim te multo quam ego sum aetate maiorem, tamen etiam ipse iam senex consulo: sed ad discendum quod opus est, nulla mihi aetas sera uideri potest; quia etsi senes magis decet docere quam discere, magis tamen discere quam quid doceant ignorare. Nihil equidem molestius fero in omnibus angustiis meis quas patior in difficillimis quaestionibus, quam in tam longinquo tuae caritatis absentiam, ut uix possim meas dare, uix recipere litteras tuas, per interualla, non dierum, non mensium, sed aliquot annorum; cum, si fieri posset, quotidie praesentem te habere uellem, cum quo loquerer quidquid uellem. Nec ideo tamen non debui facere quod potui, si non potui totum quod uolui.* This can be compared with what Augustine (*Ep.* 202A.1–4) wrote to Optatus, a bishop of unknown see, who had asked him about the same issue and whom he told that he was expecting an answer due to come from the East—Jerome is not actually mentioned. On the Augustine-Jerome correspondence see Fürst (1999); Fürst (2002). On Optatus, see *PCBE* 1, Optatus 7.

But certain essential points should be emphasised. One should first mention how conspicuous discord was when it affected the Christian community and generated mockery or hostile questioning, especially among non-Christians. This prompted John Chrysostom to imagine the following little scene:

> A pagan introduces himself and says: 'I want to become a Christian. But I do not know which party to join. There is among you all so much battle and sedition, so much trouble. Which doctrine shall I follow? What choice shall I make? Everyone says: "I am the one who tells the truth" '.[32]

If the διαφωνία of those who claimed to follow Christ could be considered as a stumbling block for adhering to the Christian faith, then an attempt to account for these internal divisions seems, at first sight, an apologetic necessity, particularly when it concerns the education of the future baptised. In addition, under Constantine, the notions of 'heresy', 'schism', and the correlative notion of 'orthodoxy' that can be implied by the adjective 'Catholic' all found their way into public law.[33] "Beliefs enter into the scope of the law, which represents a major change in the history of the Western world".[34] This marks the beginning of what may be called an 'imperial orthodoxy'

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[32] John Chrysostom, *In Acta Apost. hom.* 33.4: Τί οὖν ἂν εἴποιμεν πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας; Ἔρχεται Ἕλλην καὶ λέγει ὅτι βούλομαι γενέσθαι χριστιανὸς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ οἶδα τίνι προσθῶμαι · μάχη παρ᾽ ὑμίν πολλὴ καὶ στάσις, πολὺς θόρυβος · ποίον ἕλωμαι δόγμα; τί αἱρήσομαι; Ἕκαστος λέγει ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀληθεύω, κτλ.

[33] See Noethlichs (1971) with the reviews of Pekáry (1973) and Végh (1972). This book is the classic study of imperial legislation relating to heretics in the 4th c. A.D. An appendix (208–12) contains short, inadequate observations on the notion of 'orthodoxy' in legal texts. Unfortunately, the book is tainted by an astonishing decision to almost entirely omit the legislation of the anti-Nicene emperors Constantius II (58–59) and Valens (92–95). It is true that the drafters of the *Theodosian Code* have systematically eliminated nearly all explicit references to legislation in favour of anti-Nicenes, with the exception of *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.15 (360), which evokes a clause from the Council of Rimini (359), and of *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.4, a law passed by Valentinian II in 386 granting the supporters of the *Credo* of the same Council the right of assembly (cf. Noethlichs (1971) 122–23; Vaggione (2000) 348). Nonetheless, refusing to take into account the measures of anti-Nicene emperors is bound to prevent a full understanding of how imperial legislation against heretics worked. See also Humfress (2007) 167 and 215–68. On the notion of a 'Catholic Church' in the first Constantinian legislation, see Calderone (1962) 136–50 and Mazzarino (1962) 654–56, and also the precious, and little-known, appraisal given by Lemerle (1945) 97–98. For the further development of this notion, see Wipszycka (1996). Crifò (1999) provides an assessment of how Christian terms came to be used in imperial legislation, but, strangely enough, omits the semantic fields of 'heresy' and 'orthodoxy'.

[34] Beaucamp (2002) 345.

that would be subject to the alterations entailed either by the evolution of doctrinal disputes or the occasional meddling of sovereigns who were always liable to adjust their convictions. At the same time new religious offences appeared, a phenomenon caused by the intervention of the State in enforcing the unity of the Church,[35]—the *Reichskonzilien*, starting with those that took place in Arles (in the year 314) and Nicaea (in 325), illustrate this splendidly.[36] As a result, the same period saw the first evidence of a jurisprudence in the repression of 'heresies' and 'schisms' which had been given the status of crimes by the law of the empire that no one was allowed to ignore.[37] On the opponents of the doctrine of the imperial Church, the State could inflict various punishments, either individual or collective. The most frequent include: banning assemblies, confiscating the premises where meetings took place, ordering fines, proclaiming banishments or impeding the execution of wills.[38]

In addition, the thriving building activity in the ancient *orbis christianus* from the middle of the 310s onwards that followed the persecution carried out by Diocletian seems to have immediately triggered a struggle among different Christian groups for the control of the buildings that had just been constructed and which were intended for liturgical assembly.[39] This brought the Christians' discord to the fore throughout the empire, as is exemplified by the Donatist crisis.

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[35] See Ch. Pietri's analyses in Pietri and Pietri (1995) 216, 229–45, 263–335, 357–98, 411–51; Pietri (1997A); Pietri (1997B); Pietri (1997C). See also Lizzi (1996).

[36] I borrow the phrase *Reichskonzilien* from E. Schwartz's famous dissertation (1921).

[37] If the Donatist crisis—amounting, in some respects, to a quarrel among archivists—was an occasion for the protagonists to refer more often than not to the decisions of the emperor or his representatives—cf., for instance, August., *Ep.* 105.12; 185.25; 204.3; *Serm.* 47.22; *In Ioh. Ev. tract.* 6.25, etc.—, and if the former *consularis* of Aemilia-Liguria, Ambrose of Milan, was indeed well acquainted with the current legislation (cf. *Ep.* 74.26; 75.12; 75a.3 et 16), then it is still striking to see Faustinus and Marcellinus, two rigid Nicene priests who had got up a petition against Damasus, the bishop of Rome in 383/384, praise the imperial laws against heretics so as to brush aside the accusations levelled by their adversary who appealed to the same texts to deal severely with them [cf. Faustinus and Marcellinus, *Libellus precum*, 2 and 83. As to the date, see Pietri (1976) 871–72, and *PCBE* 2, Faustinus 2 and Marcellinus 3]. All attempts at a palingenesis of imperial constitutions turn such sources to their advantage. For a later period see Cameron (2003) 482–83 (I am very grateful to Professor Averil Cameron for presenting me with an abstract of her study).

[38] See the synthesis of R. Delmaire in *Cod. Theod.* (2005) 69–79.

[39] See M. Y. Perrin, in Pietri and Pietri (1995) 596–97.

All these factors contributed, particularly in the cities, to require every Christian to define himself or herself by joining one of the different groups who claimed to be the true followers of Christ. Exercising one's heresiological discernment, however, was not always easy. Cyril of Jerusalem advised a catechumen who arrived in a strange town not to look for a κυριακόν, the meeting place of all Christians,—'since in all their heresies the impious insist on calling their dens κυριακά—, but for the church, and more precisely the 'Catholic church'.[40] This is echoed by Pacianus of Barcelona, who engaged in polemics with Novatians:

> Let us imagine me having just arrived today in a populous city and meeting Marcionites, disciples of Apelles, Cataphrygians and others in the same vein, and who go by the name of Christians. How then would I know where my people meet, if not by the epithet "Catholic"?[41]

The Donatist crisis demonstrates how misleading such self-confidence could be, as it is well known today with what passion the Donatists and their opponents fought over the adjective 'Catholic'. In a sermon delivered in 404, Augustine dwells on the case of the Donatist bishop of Calama (today the Algerian town of Guelma), a man called Crispinus, who was accused of being behind an act of aggression on the person of the anti-Donatist bishop, Possidius.[42] According to the minutes that are quoted by Augustine, Crispinus said to the proconsul: 'Hear me: I am not a heretic', and again 'I am a Catholic'.[43] And Possidius adds the following comment:

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[40] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 18.26: κἂν ποτε ἐπιδημῇς ἐν πόλεσι, μὴ ἁπλῶς ἐξέταζε, ποῦ τοῦ κυριακόν ἐστι (καὶ γὰρ αἱ λοιπαὶ τῶν ἀσεβῶν αἱρέσεις κυριακὰ τὰ ἑαυτῶν σπήλαια καλείν ἐπιχειροῦσι), μηδέ ποῦ ἔστιν ἁπλῶς ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἀλλὰ ποῦ ἔστιν ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία. Τοῦτο γὰρ ἰδικὸν ὄνομα τυγχάνει τῆς ἁγίας ταύτης καὶ μητρὸς ἡμῶν ἁπάτων. A remarkable parallel can be found in August., *Serm.* 46.31.

[41] Pacian of Barcelona, *Epistula I ad Sempronianum* 3.2: *Ego forte ingressus hodie populosam urbem, cum Marcionitas, cum Apelleiacos, Cataphrygas, Nouatianos et ceteros eiusmodi comperissem, qui se christianos uocarent, quo cognomine congregationem meae plebis agnoscerem, nisi catholica diceretur?* It is well known that the attribute *catholicus* is the core of Pacian's efforts to refute the Novatians' theses: cf. *ibid.* 3.3; 4.1 (*Nec tamen aestues, frater, christiano mihi nomen est, catholico uero cognomen. Illud me nuncupat, istud ostendit; hoc probor, inde significor*). The latter quotation was to be chosen in the 19th c. as an epigraph to the *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*!

[42] August., *Serm.* 162A.8–12. On this affair, see *PCBE* 1, Crispinus 1.

[43] August., *Serm.* 162A.8: *Audi me, non sum haereticus; ibid.*, 10: *catholicus sum*. In *Ep.* 93.23, Augustine gives the following interpretation of how, according to him, the Donatists comprehend the attribute 'catholic': *catholicae nomen non ex totius orbis communione interpretaris sed ex obseruatione praeceptorum omnium diuinorum atque omnium sacramentorum.*

> Hence it became necessary for the Catholic bishop, after the withdrawal of the *defensor ecclesiae*, to introduce counter-arguments and convince him that he must be what he had denied being. If indeed he had remained discreet about this, the uneducated people might have believed that the Catholic bishop was actually a heretic since Crispinus denied being one, which would have resulted in an outrage as far as the weak-minded are concerned.[44]

Words were not the only things that were likely to confuse the heresiological landmarks of the faithful. In the course of his fifteenth baptismal catechesis, and in a commentary on the passage from the 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians (2:3–12) announcing the reign of apostasy before Christ's Parousia, Cyril of Jerusalem cried out:

> Here is what Paul says. Today is the day of apostasy: the men have turned away from the righteous faith. Some proclaim the paternity of the Son; others dare say that Christ was brought to life from nothingness. And before, one could clearly see the heretics, but today the church is filled with undercover heretics. Indeed the people have wandered from the truth and they have got ears. If a speech shows great persuasion, they all listen to it with pleasure. If a speech urges them to be converted, then they run away. Most have turned away from righteous words and choose Evil instead of preferring Good. This is apostasy.[45]

In Cyril's eyes, the Arian crisis, which is here directly alluded to, represents a break within the history of Christian doctrinal divisions. The controversy appeared to mark the climax of heretical deception, since it was not characterised by the conflict of clearly distinct parties but ran right through the Great Church.

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[44] Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 12.6: *Qui resultans, legibus praesentatus, cum apud proconsulem se negaret haereticum, oborta est necessitas ut illi, recedente ecclesiae defensore, a catholico episcopo resisteretur et conuinceretur eum esse quod se fuisse negauerat; quoniam, si ab eodem dissimularetur, forte catholicus episcopus ab ignorantibus haereticus crederetur, illos se quod erat negante, atque ita ex hac desidia infirmis scandalum nasceretur.* On the function of the *defensor ecclesiae*, "a legal representative (here, occasional), versed in law and with the best interests of the Church at heart", see Lancel (1996–2002) (the author's text needs correction on one point: Crispinus appears in court, not "before municipal magistrates" but before the proconsul). See also Frakes (2001).

[45] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 15.9: Ταῦτα μὲν ὁ Παῦλος. νῦν δὲ ἔστιν ἡ ἀποστασία. Ἀπέστησαν γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῆς ὀρθῆς πίστεως. Καὶ οἱ μὲν υἱοπατορίαν καταγγέλουσιν, οἱ δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρενεχθέντα λέγειν τολμῶσιν. Καὶ πρότερον μὲν ἦσαν φανεροὶ οἱ αἱρετικοὶ, νῦν δὲ πεπλήρωται ἡ ἐκκλησία κεκρυμμένων αἱρετικῶν. Ἀπέστησαν γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ κνήθονται τὴν ἀκοήν. Λόγος πιθανός, καὶ πάντες ἀκούουσιν ἡδέως. Λόγος ἐπιστροφῆς, καὶ πάντες ἀποστρέφονται. Ἀπέστησαν οἱ πλείστοι τῶν ὀρθῶν λόγων, καὶ μᾶλλον τὸ κακὸν αἱροῦνται ἢ τὸ ἀγαθὸν προαιροῦνται. Αὕτη τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀποστασία κτλ.

Ephrem the Syrian, also writing in the middle of the 4th c., evoked a very similar situation. In the *madrâshê* known under the title of *Hymns against heresies*, he identified the groups that had separated themselves from the Great Church. Many of these groups were quite early, such as Manicheans, Marcionites, Bardesainites or the various Gnostic groups, and could be easily recognised on account of their discipline or the liturgical features they have gradually acquired. Ephrem distinguished these earlier groups from contemporary adversaries, namely Arians, Sabellians, Photinians, Messalians, Paulinians and others. The earlier groups are called by Ephrem 'the ones who are within' (*barrâyê*), whereas the later groups are referred to as 'those who are without' or *gawwâyê*. Here is his description of them:

> They were "bishops" within the churches,
> And some were presbyters and deacons,
> Others were scribes or lectors;
> Some belonged to the covenant;
> From the Church they have stolen the order
> Of the various kinds of ministry:
> Ordaining priests, baptizing,
> Celebrating the Eucharist, and teaching
> That our Lord has come, and will come again.
> Blessed is the One who holds all in Truth.[46]

If, at the heart of the debates that took place in the 4th c. and at the beginning of the 5th, Manicheans, Meletians, Donatists, Anti-Nicenes, Pneumatomachi, Apollinarists, Priscillianists, Jovinianists, Origenists, Pelagians and other such groups were liable to find themselves charged with deception by their opponents,[47] it was not, in most cases, because they actually had a cult of secrecy. It was simply because the wound caused by the controversies was still open and its lips had not yet

[46] Ephraem, *Hymn. adv. haer.* 22.21; translated by Griffith (1999A) 103. See also Griffith (1999); Griffith (2001) 402–405 and Russell (1994).

[47] See, for instance: on Manicheans: John Chrysostom, *In Ep. ad Hebr. hom.* 8.4; August., *Ep.* 236.1; *Serm.* 2.2; *Acta Archelai* 65.3; on Melitians: Athanasius, *Ep. fest.* 12.1; on Donatists: August., *Serm.* 296.14; on Anti-Nicenes: Ambrose, *Expositio Ev. sec. Lucam* 7.51; on Pneumatomachi: Basil, *Ep.* 263.2; on Apollinarists: Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.7; on Priscillianists: August., *Retract.* 2.60; *Ep.* 237.3; on Jovinianists: August., *Retract.* 2.22; on Origenists: Jer., *Ep.* 84.4; 97.2; on Pelagians: August., *Serm. Dolbeau* 30.5; *Ep.* 157.22; 186.29; 194.2; 200.2; Innocent I, *apud* August., *Ep.* 182.6; 183.2; Arnobius Junior, *Praed.* 88. Unfortunately no documentation that would enable access to the opinion of the defeated on this point has become available so far. See also Löhr (2000) 293–97.

healed. The chronological arguments of Cyril of Jerusalem and Ephrem should not be taken by the contemporary historian at face value, for it is not true that there was a tactical shift in the art of religious debate among Christians in the course of the 4th c. or that the world had seen the appearance of a sort of powerful 'Nicodemism' before the term had been coined.[48] But by the 4th c. the divisions resulting from the controversies held during the previous centuries had generally led to the formation of clearly distinguishable groups, whereas in the 3rd c., at the precise moment when a number of these divisions occurred, the outlines of the opposing communities were nothing if not blurred. Thus, in order to defend the African Churches' custom of considering invalid baptism given outside their communion, Cyprian of Carthage continually emphasised the fact that the Novatians indeed had everything in common with their opponents—the same law, the same symbol, the same trinity—, but that they lacked the Holy Ghost.[49] The problem that Cyprian faced is what modern writers have called 'internal heresy'[50] or, to use Augustine's phrase (which he applied in 416 to the 'novel heresy' of Pelagius and his followers), the uncertain time when 'the separation of the Church is not yet manifest'.[51]

From the 4th c. onwards judgment in heresiological matters was to be very difficult for the faithful, and the risks of confusion would abound. This is the reason why Flavian, the bishop of Antioch between 381 and 404, decided to transfer the remains of the martyrs who had been buried in the same places as 'heretics', in order, as John Chrysostom thankfully recorded, that the people might be no longer forced

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[48] On this concept see Cantimori (1939) and Valente (2002).

[49] Cyprian, *Ep.* 69.7; 73.2.1. Cf. Basil, *Ep.* 188.1.

[50] See Dupront (2001) 118 and Quantin (2004).

[51] August., *Ep.* 178.1: *noua quaedam haeresis inimica gratiae Christi contra ecclesiam Christi conatur exsurgere, sed nondum euidenter ab ecclesia separata est*. Curiously enough, this letter has failed to attract attention, judging by the numerous recent studies on the forerunners of the Pelagian crisis. Cf., however, *PCBE* 1 Palladius 1: the letter is effectively dated by the mention (*Ep.* 178.2) of synodal letters being sent from the Councils of Carthage and Numidia to Innocent I, the bishop of Rome 401–17 (cf. Lancel (1999) 475–76). No other identification of Augustine's correspondent, one Hilarius, has apparently been found. A parallel can be established between this text and a remark by Sozomen (2, 32, 1) about the aftermath of the Nicene Council: Τὸ δὲ Ἀρείου δόγμα, εἰ καὶ πολλοίς ἐν ταίς διαλέξεσιν ἐσπουδάζετο, οὔπω εἰς ἴδιον διεκέκριτο λαὸν ἢ ὄνομα τοῦ εὑρόντος, ἀλλὰ πάντες ἅμα ἐκκλησίαζον καὶ ἐκοινώνουν, πλὴν Ναυατιανῶν καὶ τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων Φρυγῶν, Οὐαλεντίνων τε καὶ Μαρκιωνιστῶν καὶ Παυλιανῶν, καὶ εἴ τινες ἕτεροι ἑτέρας ἤδη ηὑρημένας αἱρέσεις ἐπλήρουν.

to pray 'in doubt and uncertainty, because they did not know where the graves of saints and the real treasures were'.[52]

The reputation of martyrs was as attractive as that of ascetics and could appeal to the faithful of any group. Sozomen liked to underline the fact that Macedonius, the anti-Nicene bishop of Constantinople, was greatly praised by the faithful on account of the way he lived.[53] Sozomen also points out how effective the behaviour of Nicene monks was in persuading the faithful to adhere to the Nicene Creed.[54] Epiphanius of Salamis, who if we are to believe Sozomen was admired for his attitude,[55] expressed a warning against the attraction that the exemplary life and the reputed orthodoxy of the followers of Apollinaris of Laodicea might exercise.[56]

To exhort the members of his congregation to behave correctly John Chrysostom emphasised the persuasive power of the βίος of the 'heretics'.[57] It is therefore easy to understand why Jerome asserted that asceticism contributed to salvation only if it was practised within the Church.[58] One also understands the reasons why the monks were praised to the skies by numerous rival dogmatic groups from the late 4th c. onwards.

To these individual instances of fascination others could be added, particularly the attraction exercised by talented preachers or debaters. Almost all the leaders of doctrinal schools were praised for their talent in the art of oratory. At the end of the 2nd c. Irenaeus of Lyons wrote about the Valentinians (without giving any further detail about the context):

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[52] John Chrysostom, *In ascension. D. n. I. C.* 1: ὁ δὲ λαὸς ἡμίν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν ζημίαν ὑπέμεινεν ἀπὸ τῶν τόπων, τρέχων μὲν πρὸς τὰ λείψανα τῶν μαρτύρων, μετὰ δὲ ἀμφβολίας καὶ διακρίσεως ποιούμενος τὰς εὐχας διὰ τὸ ἀγνοείσθαι τὰς θήκας τῶν ἁγίων, καὶ ποῦ κείνται οἱ θησαυροὶ οἱ ἀληθινοί. Καὶ ταυτὸν ἐγίνετο, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ ποίμνια προβάτων καθαρῶν ἀπολαῦσαι ῥείθρων ἀπειγόμενα ἔρχοιτο μὲν ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τὰς καθαρας, βρώμου δέ ποθεν ἐγγύθεν καὶ δυσωδίας ἐμπεσούσης ἀναχαιτίζοιτο πάλιν · οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ποίμνης ταύτης συνέβαινεν. Ἐβάδιζε μὲν ὁ λαὸς πρὸς τὰς καθαρὰς τῶν μαρτύρων πηγάς · αἰσθανόμενος δὲ δυσωδίας αἱρετικῆς ἐγγύθεν ἀνιούσης, ἀνεχαιτίζετο πάλιν. On the affair of the *martyrium* of Romanesia, see Franchi De Cavalieri (1928) 152–53. Cf. Soler (2006) 203–205.

[53] Sozom. 4.27.3.

[54] Sozom. 6.20.2.

[55] Sozom. 8.14.4.

[56] Epiph., *Pan.* 77.1.1. In *Pan.* 73.35.1, Epiphanius also emphasises how Meletius of Antioch's lifestyle made him highly popular.

[57] John Chrysostom, *In Acta Apost. hom.* 47.4.

[58] Jer., *Ep.* 22.38: *Ceterum uirgines, quales apud diuersas haereses et quales apud impurissimum Manicheum esse dicuntur, scorta sunt aestimanda, non uirgines.*

> They deliver speeches to the crowds with a view to touching those who belong to the Church and whom they call "ordinary people" and "church people". Thus they capture the weak and attract them, by imitating our words so as to make people come and listen to them more often.[59]

Many testimonies confirm that 'heretics', as well as 'pagans', might attend the preaching of their opponents. This happened in Antioch when Chrysostom preached against the Anomoians;[60] the situation was similar in Constantinople when Gregory Nazianzen was a resident there.[61] Donatists and anti-Donatists would sometimes go to hear their adversaries,[62] while Origen's homilies already attracted 'heretics' to him.[63] The reputation of a talented orator was obviously enough to transcend the prejudices generated by the heresiological ethos.

This ambiguity underlines the ambivalent relationship between the logic of doctrinal rhetoric and the διαγνωστικὴ ἕξις, insofar as the rhetoric is encouraged only as long as it contributes to protecting the preacher's own followers from the opponents' seductive ways. On the other hand, all attempts are made—and are considered legitimate—to overcome resistance in the supporters of the same rival, and all the arts of persuasion may be used. This provides a natural explanation for the constant reversal of the arguments and exhortations exchanged during polemics, and highlights the need for the modern historian to consider those polemics from a structural point of view. Therefore Matthew's *logion* (Matthew 10:34–35; cf. Luke 12:51–53; 21:16) which imitates the prophet Micah (7:6) to announce the signs of the end of times—'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household'—may be interpreted either with a negative value, that those who instil division within a household are 'heretics', or with a positive value, that this is the way to convert and adhere to 'the true Faith', and it is only a short step from one argument to the other.

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[59] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.15.2: *Hi enim ad multitudinem propter eos, qui sunt ab ecclesia, quos communes et ecclesiasticos ipsi dicunt, inferunt sermones, per quos capiunt simpliciores, et illiciunt eos, simulantes nostrum tractatum, uti saepius audiant.* On this text see Le Boulluec (1985) 236–37 and 325.

[60] John Chrysostom, *C. Anom.* 1 and 7.

[61] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carm.* 2.1.11, vv. 1137–45; 2.1.16, vv. 39–40.

[62] August., *Serm.* 46.31; 51.6; *Serm. Dolbeau* 30.14; Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 7.3.

[63] Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.* 6.18.2.

Such is the viewpoint that must be adopted to understand Augustine's address to Macrobius, the Donatist bishop of Hippo:

> People run away from unity, so that the husband may go one way and his wife the other, so that this man may say: "Preserve the unity with me, for I am your husband", and the wife may answer: "I shall die where my father is". We would hate to see them not share the same bed, and yet they do not have the same Christ! People run away from unity, so that relatives, fellow-citizens, friends and guests, all those that human preoccupations bring together, and who are attached to the same Christian faith, may agree with each other during feasts, weddings, in trade relationships, mutual contracts, compliments and conversations, only to see them part before God's altar! And yet this is the very place where all quarrels should end, whatever their cause; for, according to the Lord's commandment, one should first be reconciled with one's brethren before bringing offerings to the altar; but whereas they live in harmony everywhere else, here they stand divided.[64]

Not all the faithful had a heresiological ethos as well developed as that of the Donatist baker of Hippo who, as he was the tenant of an anti-Donatist deacon, complied with his own bishop's orders by (in Augustine's words) 'throwing to the ground the unbaked bread of his landlord, and refusing to have further dealings with him, not only in a Roman city but also in his homeland and not only in his homeland, but also in his very home, whereas the man was not sentenced to banishment'.[65]

Widows, and more generally beneficiaries of ecclesiastical assistance, could be tempted to benefit from the services of clerics belonging to a rival party. As for Gregory of Cappadocia, who had been installed in 339 as bishop of Alexandria instead of Athanasius who had been sent into exile, was he not accused of denying the right to receive alms to the destitute and the widows (that is to say those who remained faith-

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[64] August., *Ep.* 108.17: *Fugitur unitas, ut propinqui et ciues et amici et hospites et quicumque sibi humana necessitudine conligati utrique christiani in conuiuiis ineundis, in matrimoniis tradendis et accipiendis, in emendo ac uendendo, in pactis et placitis, in salutationibus, in consensionibus, in conlocutionibus, in omnibus suis rebus negotiisque concordes sint et a dei altare discordes* (…). In *Ep.* 253 Augustine advises Benenatus, an anti-Donatist bishop, to marry off a young orphan girl of whom he is the guardian *cum domo catholica, cuius non solum nullam aduersitatem uerum etiam fidele adiutorium habere possit ecclesia.*

[65] August., *C. litt. Petiliani* 2.83.184: *Nonne apud Hipponem, ubi ego sum, non desunt qui meminerint Faustinum uestrum regni sui tempore praecepisse, quoniam catholicorum ibi paucitas erat, ut nullus eis panem coqueret, ita ut cuiusdam diaconi nostri fornarius inquilinus domnaedii sui panem incoctum abiecerit eique nulla exilii lege damnato communicationem non solum in ciuitate romana, sed etiam in patria sua, nec solum in patria sua, sed etiam in domo sua negauerit?*

ful to Athanasius), and of ordering the destruction of the containers in which they could bring home oil and wine?[66]

Implementing an heresiological ethos involved compromising with the necessities of life. If the sources give prominence to heroic illustrations of διαγνωστικὴ ἕξις, it would nonetheless be illusory to endeavour to assess the importance of, on the one hand, behaviour which complied with church discipline and, on the other hand, behaviour which did not. My purpose here was to underline the tensions that influence the lives of the faithful during times of doctrinal controversies involving large numbers of people. An apophthegm attributed to Abba Phocas and referring to an episode apparently dating from the end of the 6th c. encapsulates the uncertainties of the age. There was once a Chalcedonian monk called James, who lived in the Kellia, and who was ἀκέραιος. He was so humble that he was loved by all, whether they were followers or opponents of the Chalcedonian Creed, each group having a church of their own. The two parties would warn him against any contact with the rival group. Not knowing what to do, Abba James retired to a distant cell and spent forty days praying and fasting, prey to attacks by demons. When the forty days were over Christ appeared to him as a child and asked him to justify his behaviour. The ascetic said:

> "Lord, you know what I have. Some tell me: "Do not renounce the Church!" and the others tell me: "The Diophysites are fooling you". And I am in trouble. The reason why you see me thus is that I do not know what to do". The Lord answered: "The place where you are now is the right one for you". No sooner had he heard the words than the monk found himself before the gates of the holy church of the orthodox supporters of the council.[67]

Many, in those days, must have envied such a monk.

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[66] Athanasius, *Hist. Ar.* 13.3: καὶ γὰρ καὶ χηρῶν καὶ ἄλλων ἀνεξόδων λαβόντων ἐλεημοσύνην ἐκέλευε τὰ δεδομένα διαρπάζεσθαι καὶ τὰ ἀγγεία, ἐν οἷς ἔφερον τὸ ἔλαιον καὶ τὸν οἶνον, κατάσσασθαι. A similar situation was reported in 356: cf. *Hist. Ar.* 61.2. See also, on a more positive note, August., *C. ep. Parm.* 3.2.16; *Ep.* 185.36. On the importance of the link between the poor and the bishop, see Brown (1992) 71–117 and Brown (2002).

[67] *Apophthegmata Patrum* (alphabetic collection) (PG 65.432–33), Περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Φωκᾶ 1: εἶπεν αὐτῷ · Δέσποτα, σὺ γινώσκεις τί ἔχω. Ἐκείνοι λέγουσί μοι, Μὴ ἀφῇς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν · καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι λέγουσί μοι, Πλανῶσι σε οἱ Διφυσίται. Κἀγὼ ἀπορούμενος, καὶ μὴ εἰδὼς τί δράσω, ἦλθον εἰς τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο. Ἀποκρίνεται αὐτῷ ὁ Κύριος · Ὅπου εἶ, καλῶς εἶ. Καὶ εὐθέως σὺν τῷ λόγῳ, εὑρέθη πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας τῶν ὀρθοδόξων τῶν συνοδικῶν (mentioned by Chitty (1980) 287 and Meunier (2003) 176).

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE 'ARIAN CONTROVERSY' IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

David M. Gwynn

Abstract

The so-called 'Arian Controversy' that divided the Christian Church in the 4th c. has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate in recent decades. The literary sources from which the majority of our knowledge of the controversy derives are highly polemical and distorted, written almost exclusively from the perspective of those whose positions would come to be accepted as 'orthodox', and this in turn has directly influenced scholarly interpretations of the material evidence from this crucial period in the history of the Church. In this paper I wish to reconsider that material evidence and ask how an archaeological approach independent of the biases of our literary sources might broaden our understanding of the controversy and its impact upon the 4th c. Roman empire.

Introduction

The 'Arian Controversy', as the doctrinal debates that divided the Christian Church in the 4th c. are traditionally known, began *ca.* 321 in a dispute between bishop Alexander of Alexandria and his presbyter Arius concerning the definition of the divinity of the Son and of His relationship with the Father.[1] This dispute had spread to involve almost the entire eastern Church by the time that Constantine, the first Christian Roman emperor, united the empire under his rule through his defeat of his eastern rival Licinius in 324. The following year, Constantine summoned the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church at Nicaea in May 325. In the original Nicene Creed, the Son

[1] The standard modern account is that of Hanson (1988), although see also now Ayres (2004) and Behr (2004). The best account of Arius' career and teachings is that of R. Williams (2001) 48–61, who presents the chronology of the early years of the controversy adopted here.

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was declared to be *homoousios* ('of one essence') with the Father, a verdict that upheld the position of Alexander by maintaining the true divinity of Christ. Arius, who rejected the term *homoousios* and taught that the Son was God but not true God, was condemned and exiled and the doctrines attributed to him were anathematised.

Despite this apparently decisive verdict, however, the debate over the precise divinity and status of the Son continued unabated throughout the 4th c. A wide spectrum of theological positions and creedal statements emerged during this long period of controversy,[2] until in 381 the second ecumenical Council of Constantinople, summoned by emperor Theodosius I, reasserted and refined the verdict of Nicaea. Even then divisions remained within the Christian empire, although the nature of those divisions now underwent a significant change. The conversion during the 4th c. of the Goths and other Germanic peoples to a form of Christian belief that those who defended the Nicene and Constantinopolitan-Nicene creeds regarded as 'Arian' brought a new dimension to the controversy, with sharper divisions upon ethnic and political as well as theological lines. In the period after 381 these divisions led to tension both in the East, particularly in the city of Constantinople itself, and above all in the West, where the 'Arian' rulers of the newly emerging Germanic kingdoms of the Visigoths, the Vandals and later the Ostrogoths faced potential conflict with the hierarchy of the 'orthodox' or 'catholic' Church within their realms.

It is not my intention here to present in full the complexity of the theological debates of the 4th c. The purpose of the current paper is more limited, to consider how and to what extent the archaeological evidence of material culture and topography can be applied to what is almost invariably studied as a literary theological controversy. It is of course true that it is the texts that provide the vast majority of our knowledge of 4th c. Christian doctrine, and thus it is the textual evidence that has established the framework within which modern scholars have usually approached the 'Arian Controversy'. However, the texts that we possess are also almost without exception highly polemical and potentially distorted, particularly the writings of Athanasius of Alexandria (the successor of Alexander) who is our most important

[2] For a convenient summary of this extremely complex period, see Behr (2004) 61–122. Alongside those who maintained the Nicene formula that the Son and the Father were *homoousios*, other influential teachings held that the Son was *homoiousios* ('of like substance'), *homoios* ('like') or indeed *anomoios* ('unlike') to the Father.

single source. This polemical bias makes it all the more crucial that we consider all the evidence, material as well as textual, and ask whether an archaeological approach might broaden our understanding of the context and nature of the controversy.

Polemic and Polarisation

As I have already observed, the most important contemporary source for the 4th c. theological conflicts is the corpus of writings by Athanasius of Alexandria (bishop 328–373).[3] For much of his career Athanasius was himself a figure of huge controversy, condemned by episcopal councils and exiled by emperors, but by the end of his lifetime he had come to be held as the 'champion of orthodoxy', the great opponent of 'Arianism' and the defender of the Nicene Creed.[4]

This interpretation of Athanasius' career, which does have an element of truth, originated in the writings of the bishop himself. Throughout his numerous works, Athanasius presents a vision of the 4th c. Church as polarised between two distinct factions, the 'orthodox' whom he represents and the 'Arians' who attack Christ and deny the divinity of the Son. This interpretation was followed in turn by the 5th c. ecclesiastical historians Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, who provide our only detailed narrative accounts of the 4th c. controversies.[5] They too divide the Church into distinct 'orthodox' and 'heretical' factions, and this polarised model has remained extremely influential upon both ancient and modern interpretations of what has thus become known as the 'Arian Controversy'.

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[3] For a more detailed analysis of the writings of Athanasius and his interpretation of the 'Arian Controversy', on which the argument presented here is based, see Gwynn (2007).

[4] For a historical-political account of Athanasius' career, see Barnes (1993); on Athanasius' central role in the theological developments of the 4th c., see Hanson (1988) 417–58 and Behr (2004) 163–259.

[5] All three ecclesiastical historians derived their understanding of the 'Arian Controversy' principally from Athanasius' writings, and Socrates states explicitly that he rewrote the first two books of his *Ecclesiastical History* after reading the works of Athanasius (Soc. 2.1). The fourth major ecclesiastical historian of the first half of the 5th c., Philostorgius, is to some extent an exception, for he was an adherent of the so-called 'Neo-Arian' or 'Anomoian' theology and primarily for this reason his work only survives in fragments. Despite his very different biases, however, Philostorgius' account nevertheless shares the polarised vision of the 4th c. visible in our 'orthodox' sources.

It is only relatively recently that modern scholars have come to recognise the degree to which this polarised model is a polemical construct that has severely distorted our understanding of the theological debates of the 4th c. and their participants. The relative insignificance of Arius himself within the controversy which has taken his name has been amply demonstrated, notably by Maurice Wiles,[6] while R. P. C. Hanson in particular has emphasised that the traditional image of a conflict between established 'orthodoxy' and manifest 'heresy' cannot be maintained. "On the subject which was primarily under discussion there was not as yet any orthodox doctrine… [the controversy] is not the story of a defence of orthodoxy, but a search for orthodoxy, a search conducted by the method of trial and error".[7] The question at stake was not whether Christ was divine, which every Christian of the 4th c. believed, but how that divinity should be defined and expressed, and only gradually did the answers that would come to be described as 'orthodox' begin to emerge.

Despite such scholarly warnings, however, the legacy of the polarised polemic of Athanasius and later writers has not proved so easy to avoid. It is not enough simply to recognise that 'orthodoxy' and 'Arianism' are constructs that are difficult to define, for the very polarisation which created those constructs must itself be rejected. In contrast to the contemporary Donatist Schism, which divided the North African Church into two recognisable blocs, there was no group within 4th c. Christianity that described itself as 'Arian', and there was no separate 'Arian church' that we can seek to identify.[8] What we find throughout the complex period between the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople is instead a wide spectrum of differing theological positions, whose respective adherents sought to establish their own beliefs as the approved teachings of the one 'orthodox' and 'catholic' Church. Only after 381 did this situation change, with the imperial legislation that enforced the decisions of the council of Constantinople and then more significantly the emergence of the Germanic kingdoms in the West. To describe the Goths or the Vandals as 'Arian' is still far from

[6] See in particular Wiles (1996).

[7] Hanson (1988) xviii–xx.

[8] Thus Rowan Williams (1992) 102, in his review of Hanson, concluded that "the time has probably come to relegate the term 'Arianism' at least to inverted commas, and preferably to oblivion".

accurate,[9] but in their respective kingdoms it is for the first time legitimate to speak of two distinct churches, one 'Germanic' and the other 'Catholic', each with their own independent hierarchical organisations. For this later period the polarised model constructed by Athanasius and those who followed his lead is thus to some extent appropriate, in a way which it is not for the 4th c. Church of Athanasius' own time.

This very brief analysis of the polarised polemic of our textual sources has important consequences for the study of the archaeological evidence for the 4th c. theological controversies. It has occasionally been argued that it is possible to identify 'Arian' or 'anti-Arian' artistic and architectural designs, or that the urban landscape of a city like Antioch or Alexandria in this period can be divided between 'Arian' and 'orthodox' factions. Such claims need to be studied on a case by case basis, and I will discuss a number of individual examples in the pages that follow. But it needs to be emphasised at the outset that to seek such precise distinctions between 'Arian' and 'orthodox' in our physical evidence is to impose upon that evidence the polarisation of our polemical texts. The relationship between art and doctrine is considerably more complex than this simplified model would allow, while the Christian communities in the cities of the eastern empire at this time were not divided into distinct churches but rather included a variety of Christian groups, all seeking to control the one true Church. Again, this situation will change after 381, and at the end of this paper I will return to this new context of imperial legislation and Germanic 'Arianism'. But it is with the middle years of the 4th c. that I am primarily concerned, and here the polarised polemic of our sources must not be allowed to dictate our approach to the potential evidence offered by archaeology.

Christian Art and Doctrinal Controversy in the Fourth Century

The status and role of art within early Christianity has been a subject of vast debate ever since Antiquity, and I cannot discuss the general background to this question in any detail now. The old scholarly belief

[9] I will return to this question of Germanic 'Arianism' in the final section of this paper.

that the early Church was actively opposed to images has been increasingly (and rightly) rejected in recent years,[10] but in this section of my paper I am more concerned with a narrower but no less difficult question, that of the relationship between art and doctrine.[11] To what extent does art express doctrinal concepts and dogmas, particularly in a time of theological controversy such as the 4th c.?

The Christian Church underwent a transformation in the years that followed the conversion of Constantine, both in public appearance and importance and also in ecclesiastical and doctrinal organisation, and this transformation inevitably included the sphere of art. Not only did imperial patronage from Constantine onwards allow public and monumental Christian art to be produced on a scale far greater than ever before, but the relationship of religion and art was also different for Christianity than for Graeco-Roman paganism, for Christian art drew upon the foundation of a scriptural text.[12] The iconography through which those scriptures were expressed required definition no less than written doctrine,[13] a process that for art as for doctrine developed only through a process of trial and error.[14] It is therefore legitimate to consider how the 4th c. theological debates may have both influenced and been influenced by the Christian art of this period and what light such evidence may shed on our understanding of the controversy.

The significance of art as a form of Christian theological expression cannot be denied. The idea that images provide a means to teach the Bible to the illiterate received perhaps its most famous expression by Pope Gregory the Great,[15] but there is also a deeper sense in which art is able to express some ideas more fully than is possible with

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[10] See the landmark study of Sister Murray (1977), and more recently the various works of Elsner (1995 and 1998) and the survey article of Averil Cameron (2005).

[11] The relationship between art and doctrine, both in Antiquity and in more recent centuries, has been the subject of much modern scholarship. For a convenient summary of the major arguments, see Dillenberger (1986).

[12] "In visual terms, Christianity brought a new relationship between images and their referents, a relationship of dependence in which the image relied on a prior text—a scripture—for its meaning" (Elsner (1998) 251).

[13] A point rightly emphasised by Mathews (1999) 10–11, and also by Elsner (1998) 223: "On the level of the visual arts, this process of narrowing, defining, excluding, led to the slow creation of a canonical iconography for Christian representations which would be largely in place by the dawn of the sixth century".

[14] Grabar (1969) 112.

[15] Greg. *Ep.* 9.209. On Gregory's correspondence regarding images with Serenus of Marseilles, see Chazelle (1990).

words.[16] Art is by its nature allusive, and so well suited to the expression of religious feeling, while at the same time Christian art is never simply illustrative, for the images go beyond what is revealed in Scripture and so are themselves a form of interpretation. Moreover, artistic interpretations no less than textual polemics represent the attitudes and beliefs of those responsible for them, and Christian art can therefore represent positions within contemporary debates. This is well demonstrated by the decoration of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, built by Pope Sixtus III in the 430s, where the iconographic depiction of the Virgin Mary was chosen at least in part to celebrate the affirmation of Mary as *Theotokos* ('bearer of God') by the third ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431.[17] However, such iconography is only a theological statement at a fairly basic level,[18] and it has to be emphasised that art (no less than texts) does have limits on the degree to which it can express precise doctrinal concepts. To what extent then can art represent the diverse spectrum of theological ideas expressed during the 4th c., if we reject the simple and polarised model of an 'Arian Controversy'?

In an important article entitled "Artistic Idiom and Doctrinal Development", Sister Charles Murray argues that art was not itself a subject of Christian controversy until the time of Iconoclasm but was rather a force for unity, expressing essential and agreed truths even during periods of debate like the 4th c. "Art…was able to give a considered expression to the mind of the whole church, and not simply to that of any given party",[19] for art "could cross all boundaries and was not a matter of rival group loyalties".[20] Murray may perhaps be overly optimistic in her evaluation of the status of art as a vehicle for orthodoxy and of art's role in the development of Christian thought,[21] but she is

[16] Murray (1989) 295–96.

[17] For this traditional interpretation of S. Maria Maggiore, see for example Elsner (1998) 227–28. That interpretation has been challenged, notably by Spain (1979), esp. 530–34), but she perhaps goes too far in denying any connection whatsoever between the decoration of the church and the Council of 431.

[18] Grabar (1969) 47 indeed was moved to observe, with certain exaggeration, that if S. Maria Maggiore *was* intended to commemorate the Council of Ephesus in 431 then this only demonstrates that Christian art at that time "was incapable of expressing the theological ideas discussed in this council".

[19] Murray (1989) 290.

[20] Murray (1989) 291.

[21] Murray (1989) 290: "The artistic expression of doctrine seems to have been the only unifying theological force in the early church…and indeed so powerful a medium

certainly correct to emphasise that 'party' positions are extremely difficult to identify in the artistic evidence that we possess. The iconography of Christ took a remarkable variety of forms in the flowering of Christian art from Constantine onwards, and yet no particular image can be characterised as 'Arian' or 'Nicene'.[22] As Grabar observed some years ago, the difficulty with any attempt to trace such precise theological meanings in Christian art is that such an approach all too frequently leads us to impose our own models upon the evidence rather than letting the evidence speak for itself, and so "tends to make the monuments say what we want them to say".[23]

Nevertheless, a number of 4th c. Christian artefacts and images have been interpreted as reflecting to varying degrees the controversies of the period in which they were made.[24] Malbon has described the prominent setting of Christ enthroned above the triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (died 359) as an "orthodox affirmation" of the divinity and humanity of Christ.[25] However, Malbon is rightly cautious in developing this argument for neither Christ's divinity nor His Incarnation were ever denied by any of the different Christian groups active in Junius Bassus' time.[26] More forcefully, Carolyn Watson has argued in some detail that the Brescia Lipsanotheca, an ivory casket probably constructed in northern Italy in the late 4th c., may be a product of the 'anti-Arian' campaigns of Ambrose of Milan in 386.[27] I will return to the context of these campaigns later in this paper, but Watson certainly demonstrates that the

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was it that, when eventually the positive and negative deliverances of logic had run into the ground, and propositional theology had reached stalemate, it provided the church with its last great means of developing doctrine".

[22] A point well made by Grabar (1969) 121 and also by Shepherd (1977) 111. Whether Grabar was correct to attribute this apparent lack of precise definition to the inadequacy of the iconographical terminology of the time, an inadequacy which he in turn explained by attributing all 4th c. Christian imagery to inspiration from imperial imagery (Grabar (1969) 45), is rather more dubious and has indeed been challenged, particularly by Mathews (1999) as we shall see below.

[23] Grabar (1969) 121.

[24] In what follows I have focused only upon a few select examples. For a broader discussion of possible 'Arian' or 'anti-Arian' iconography, see Ferrua (1991) 15–36.

[25] Malbon (1990) 186 n. 82. Cf. MacCormack (1981) 65–66 and 129–31 on the theological juxtaposition of these two scenes on the Junius Bassus sarcophagus and their derivation from imperial art (particularly the *adventus*).

[26] Malbon (1990) 185–86 n. 82: "The image of Christ as victor over death on the sarcophagus of a dead Christian bears the clear appropriateness of a prayer of faith, whatever the contemporary christological controversies".

[27] Watson (1981).

biblical iconography of the casket has considerable parallels to the language of Ambrose's sermons and polemical writings, and she therefore concludes that the casket should be understood in terms of an "anti-Arian program". The parallels that Watson cites are not always as conclusive as she would like to suggest,[28] and it is far from self-evident that the casket's iconography must derive from Ambrose, for many of the images depicted are common biblical scenes which are widespread in Christian art and literature. Thus, although it is true that a scene such as the Raising of Lazarus "can be seen as a statement of orthodox belief in the divinity of Christ, and a concomitant denial of the Arian belief that Christ was not by nature divine",[29] that same scene could be viewed as a proof of Christ's divinity by every Christian in the 4th c., regardless of their precise doctrinal beliefs.[30] Still, Watson has proven that the Brescia casket *can* be understood as an expression of Ambrosian 'anti-Arian' polemic, even if this is by no means the only possible interpretation for this artefact's origins and iconography.

The strongest statement that 4th c. Christian art should be approached through the polarised matrix of 'Arianism' and 'orthodoxy' has come from Thomas Mathews. In his deliberately controversial book, *The Clash of Gods*, Mathews set out primarily to reject the theory of Grabar and others that early Christian art derived its imagery almost exclusively from imperial iconography. On the contrary, as his title suggests, Mathews argues for the derivation of Christian imagery from that of the pagan gods. Yet he also believes, like Watson, that the imagery developed by the Church in the period of artistic expansion from Constantine onwards was directly influenced by the theological controversies of that period. There is certainly a strong element of truth in this argument, for the process of Christian definition

[28] Most interesting here is the large image on the back of the casket which depicts Peter's judgement of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11). Ananias is being carried out for burial, while Peter confronts Sapphira, a scene which might easily be interpreted as an allusion to Ambrose's clash with the empress Justina in 386 (Watson (1981) 292). Yet as Watson (1981) 286 observes, there is no reference to this passage from Acts anywhere in Ambrose's extant writings, and when Ambrose does present Justina in biblical terms in his letter to his sister Marcellina (*Ep.* 76) it is as Herodias and Jezebel, not Sapphira.

[29] Watson (1981) 287.

[30] As Watson (1981) 288 indeed acknowledges, while "it is tempting to seek in these miracle scenes features that are incompatible with an Arian view of Christ, and that would establish in our eyes an exclusive connection with orthodoxy (…) such features, alas, do not exist in these simple images".

in the 4th c. affected iconography no less than doctrine, and Mathews is therefore correct to insist that "the images of the fourth century played an important role in this struggle to define who Christ was".[31] What is more open to question is the conclusion that he then derives from this argument. For Mathews explicitly asserts that images such as the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem and the depiction of the divine Christ with a mandorla halo emerged in post-Constantinian Christian art as "part of a concerted effort to emphasise moments of Christ's glory in an anti-Arian context".[32]

The Entry into Jerusalem occurs on a number of 4th c. images depicting Christ from both East and West, including the Junius Bassus sarcophagus as we have seen above, but the only instance when this image appears to possess an explicitly 'anti-Arian' meaning in fact dates to the 8th c. The Church of the Virgin in Cairo contains images of the Entry into Jerusalem and of Christ's Ascension which are accompanied by an inscription that derives in part from Athanasius' *Orations against the Arians*.[33] This is indeed striking, but to use this single 8th c. example to explain the appearance of the same iconography in the 4th c., as Mathews wishes to do,[34] is hardly an acceptable methodology. The same difficulty likewise arises from Mathews' argument that the image of Christ with a mandorla halo or an aureole of light also originated in an 'anti-Arian' context. Here there is a 4th c. inscription which might support his case, for the earliest known example of Christ with the aureole is in the late 4th c. catacomb of Domitilla in Rome, where the lunette is encircled with the text *Qui filius diceris et pater invenieris* ('you are said to be the Son and are found to be the Father'). As Mathews observes, this text equates Christ with His Father, echoing the language of John 14:9 ('Whoever has seen me has seen the Father'), a passage frequently cited by Athanasius and other opponents of 'Arianism'.[35] Once again, however, we cannot therefore con-

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[31] Mathews (1999) 53.

[32] Mathews (1999) 53.

[33] See Sacopoulo (1957) and, for the date of composition as 735, MacCoull (1986). In the first edition of *The Clash of Gods* (1993) Mathews dated the inscription and the accompanying images to the 4th c., and although in the revised edition of his book (1999) he accepts MacCoull's 8th c. date (xi) his argument does not actually change.

[34] Mathews (1999) 53.

[35] A parallel but later example of the use of this text in what was almost certainly intended as an 'anti-Arian' statement is the apse mosaic of the 6th c. Church of San Michele in Africisco in Ravenna, now restored in Berlin. Here Christ holds in his left

clude as Mathews does that all late 4th c. images of Christ with the mandorla or aureole were intended to signify this same message and that in such images the light surrounding Christ is "meant to signify Christ's divinity in an expressly anti-Arian sense".[36]

Mathews accepts at face value the polarised construction of the 'Arian Controversy' that as I have already sought to demonstrate is the product of our polemical textual sources. Thus he assumes that the glorification of Christ as God, which he rightly identifies as a central theme of the newly expanding Christian iconography in the 4th c., must be intended to attack the 'Arians' who denied the Son's full divinity and to uphold the theology of the Nicene Creed.[37] Yet no one in the 4th c. Church questioned that Christ was in some sense God, and thus to argue that art that celebrates His divinity must be 'Nicene' does not do justice to the complex reality of the doctrinal debates of this time.[38] This of course is not to suggest that Christian art such as the Domitilla Catacomb image and inscription cannot reflect the same arguments as the theological polemic of writers like Athanasius.[39] But

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hand a book open to quotations from both John 14:9 ('Whoever has seen me has seen the Father') and John 10:30 ('The Father and I are one').

[36] Mathews (1999) 118. Mathews emphasises that "light was the metaphor invoked by the Council of Nicaea in its condemnation of Arius" (*ibid.*), where the Son is described as 'Light from Light'. However, such language was also used for Christ by men whom Athanasius at least regarded as 'Arian', including in the 'Dedication Creed' of Antioch in 341 and in the so-called 'Blasphemy of Sirmium' in 357. Moreover, the theology of the text from the catacomb of Domitilla is certainly not that of the Nicene Creed, but is rather 'Sabellian' or 'Modalist' in its complete identification of the Son with the Father.

[37] Mathews (1999) 11: "Arianism, the denial of the Son's full divinity, split the Christian church in two in the fourth century".

[38] Thus Mathews (1999) 53 asserts that, as the Nicene Creed declared that Christ was God, "the new thrust of Christian art in the fourth century was aimed at advertising this belief". It is in this light that he interprets the imagery of Christ in glory visible for example in the iconography of Santa Pudenziana: "[i]n the wake of the Arian controversy that dominated fourth-century theological debate, the aim of the artist was not to make an image of any mere earthly man, however exalted his status, but to create the true superman, a Christ who would be equal to God the Father" (Mathews (1999) 101–103). That such an image glorifies Christ as the Son of God is not in doubt. To assume that the image is therefore 'Nicene' and teaches the 'equality' of Son and Father goes considerably further than the evidence allows.

[39] One famous later instance where the polemical construction of the 'Arian Controversy' *did* apparently influence an artistic representation is the early 6th c. Church of St Polyeuktos in Constantinople. According to the Polyeuktos epigram in the *Greek Anthology*, a mosaic within the church depicted how Constantine 'found the light of the Trinity' in baptism and was purified. This refers to the legend of Constantine's baptism in Rome and not to his historical baptism by the 'Arian' Eusebius of Nicomedia,

those polemics cannot be taken as representative of the wider development of Christian iconography in the 4th c. Mathews' approach only continues the polarised distortions created by our written sources, and in seeking proof for his 'anti-Arian' argument he would seem to have fallen into precisely the trap against which Grabar had warned, reading into the evidence what he wishes to find.

Nevertheless, Mathews must surely be correct on one fundamental point. We cannot treat the emerging iconography of Christ in the 4th c. independently from the contemporary doctrinal controversies that debated the extent of the Son's divinity and His relationship to the Father. On the contrary, the development of Christian art and doctrine need to be considered together, for both reflect the same process of gradual definition that transformed the post-Constantinian Church. However, just as the simple polarisation of our polemical sources must not be allowed to conceal the complexity of the theological debates of the 'Arian Controversy', so too we must not impose a rigid model to explain the equally complex emergence of Christian iconography in this crucial period. The same image of Christ could be seen in different ways by different viewers,[40] be it on the Junius Bassus sarcophagus, the Brescia Casket or the wall of a church, and it is for this exact reason that we cannot pin down any given image as representative of a specific 'Arian' or 'anti-Arian' theological position. Perhaps the greatest extant example of this ambiguity is provided by the so-called 'Arian' and 'Catholic' baptisteries of Ostrogothic Ravenna.[41] Constructed in a later period when two distinct churches did exist, the iconography of these two structures is identical, even though the theology that the images expressed could be understood in significantly different ways. The inherent ambiguity of such iconography may reflect the limitations of art as an expression of precise doctrinal beliefs, but it also reflects, more accurately than the polemic of our written

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and so implies (following the polemic) that 'Arianism' amounted to a denial of the Trinity (see Milner (1994) 79–80).

[40] This was already recognised by Grabar (1969) 121–22, but is particularly emphasised by Elsner (1995) 4, for whom the importance of viewer perspective is a central theme. "Viewing is always a dual process of interpretation in which what is seen becomes fitted into the already existent framework of the viewer's knowledge and thereby, very subtly, changes both the content of what the viewer knows (because something new has been added) and the meaning of what is seen (because it is now framed by the viewer's knowledge".

[41] Von Simson (1948) 118.

sources, the true complexity of the controversies over theology and definition in the emerging Christian world.

Sacred Topography and the 'Arian Controversy'

Up until this point, I have only been concerned with the relationship between the so-called 'Arian Controversy' and art, that is to say, with specific images and artefacts and the extent to which they may reflect or reveal the theological divisions in the Christian Church in the 4th c. However, such art only represents one element of the wider physical context in which the 4th c. controversies took place. In the following pages, I wish to broaden my approach and to consider how some of the major episodes of the controversies may have been shaped by, and in turn have shaped, that wider context. To do so, we must now turn our attention to the location and function of Christian buildings (particularly churches and *martyria*) and the ceremonial activities that took place in and around them, and ask what role this sacred topography may have played in the 'Arian Controversy'.

The study of Christian topography, broadly defined here to include not only the traditional emphasis upon 'the location of physical phenomena' within a given site but also the more recent interest in topography as 'spatial narrative',[42] has received much attention from archaeologists of Late Antiquity.[43] That attention, however, has focused primarily upon the impact of the rise of Christianity and of the Christian bishop upon the urban landscape. This is obviously a subject of immense importance, but in light of the theme of the present paper, one significant caution needs to be raised. Modern accounts of 'Christianisation' in the 4th c. have not always been sufficiently aware of the diversity within Christianity in this period, and of how this may have influenced the

[42] For these two distinct yet closely interconnected definitions of topography, see Lavan (2003) 173–74. Here I agree with Richard Lim (1999) 265–66, that "topography need not be seen as primarily made up of bricks and mortar; rather, the topography of a city may be said to be constituted by the interactions between particular practices and imaginative structures, and by specific patterns or modalities of temporal and spatial use. That is to say, it depends on how people choose to move through or occupy particular spaces at particular times".

[43] The bibliography is vast and cannot be summarised here: for an introduction, see Lavan (2001).

emergence of a 'Christian topography'.[44] Moreover, even those scholars who have focused upon the physical context of internal Christian conflicts have at times failed to make sufficient allowance for what we have already seen to be the highly polemical nature of our literary sources.[45] The interaction of archaeology with those texts can indeed shed valuable light upon the controversies of the 4th c.[46] But in such an analysis we must again be aware that the realities of Christian life which the physical evidence reveals were far more complex than the simple, polarised separation of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' which our polemical sources present.

The primary physical evidence for Christianity that archaeology can provide is of course the remains of buildings, particularly churches and *martyria*, and their locations within their urban landscape. The quality of such evidence inevitably varies between different sites, with those sites of which we are best informed almost invariably exceptional (as is certainly true of the examples that I will use below), but most importantly recent topographical studies have demonstrated clearly the limitations of archaeology alone for the study of internal Christian conflict. The ongoing *Topographie Chrétienne* research programme has identified in several western cities a pattern of a single internal 'episcopal' church with a number of additional churches and *martyria* outside the city walls,[47] while a 'great church' of particular prestige can also be found in the major eastern cities which possessed multiple intra-mural churches, such as Antioch and Alexandria. Possession of the episcopal church was of great importance, for this is where the bishop preached and where baptisms were performed, while those

[44] As was rightly emphasised by Curran (2000) 116–17 in his study of 4th c. Rome. See also the comments of Lim (1999) 278–79, although Lim's conclusion, that "the urban history of late-antique Rome may thus be read increasingly as a tale of two rival and parallel cities, not so much pagan versus Christian but rather secular versus Christian Rome" (280), is again rather too polarised in its conception of a 'Christian Rome'.

[45] This is particularly true of the work of Haas (1997) on Alexandria, for Haas' repeated emphasis that Alexandria was distinguished by sharply defined ethno-religious communal boundaries (e.g. 8–9 and 335–36) is a direct product of the polemical nature of so many of our sources for that city (a point to which I will return below). For a topographical study more aware of the limitations of our evidence, see Curran (2000) on building activities in Rome influenced by the contested episcopal elections of Liberius and Felix (129–37) and of Damasus and Ursinus (137–42).

[46] See the introductory comments of Krautheimer (1983) 1–5.

[47] For a brief survey of this topographical model and relevant bibliography, see Cantino Wataghin (2003) 226–30.

whom the bishop denounced could be restricted to extra-mural *martyria* or to private household assemblies.[48] Yet it is almost impossible to determine from the design or the location of an individual church what group of Christians may have worshipped there or what doctrinal beliefs they may have held.[49] Instead, we must depend upon our polemical literary sources for our knowledge of the competition for the possession of important churches that took place in a number of 4th c. cities, and this is equally true of the use of the religious space around such churches, including both ceremonial activity (notably processions) and the recurring threat of violence.[50]

The city of Antioch, the subject of a number of outstanding scholarly studies in past decades,[51] demonstrates the difficulties that can beset an attempt to bring together archaeological and literary evidence in a period of Christian controversy. Of all the great sees of the 4th c. Church, that of Antioch was the most divided, with two, three or at times even four competing bishops in the period following the Council

[48] There is a good discussion of the emergence of such a 'heterodox topography' in late 4th c. Rome in Maier (1995). However, by the period that Maier describes the wider social and legal context of the 'Arian Controversy' had changed significantly from the earlier decades of the 4th c. which I am concerned with here. I return to this changed context in the last years of the century in the final section of this paper.

[49] The standard work on the development of Christian architecture is Krautheimer (1986), who demonstrates that it was the needs of liturgy rather than doctrine that shaped the various forms of church structure that developed from Constantine onwards (see esp. 39–43). Even in later periods when Christian divisions became more marked, as between Chalcedonians and Miaphysites, it remains difficult to identify churches purely on the grounds of design and decoration, as is well demonstrated by Mango (1975).

[50] The rise in urban violence in the 4th c. Roman empire due to conflicts between Christians has been highlighted by Gregory (1979) and more recently Gaddis (2005), although McLynn (1992) has rightly observed that the emphasis upon Christian violence in our evidence is to some extent at least a product of the nature of the sources. For the role of processions as a means both to gather support and to express a particular ideology in Christian controversies, see Gregory (1979) 211–12. The importance of such ceremonial activity is particularly demonstrated by the depictions of processions of saints and of the imperial court that were set up in the churches of Ravenna after Justinian's reconquest of the city in 540. As Mathews (1999) 169 observes, through such imagery as well as in reality "the city's space has been reclaimed. The orthodox replaced the Arians in the mosaic processions as well as in the processions through the streets of the city".

[51] See in particular Petit (1955), Downey (1961) and Liebeschuetz (1972). There is an account of the specifically Antiochene aspects of the 4th c. doctrinal controversies in Wallace-Hadrill (1982) 67–95.

of Nicaea.[52] Yet archaeology can reveal little regarding the topography of these divisions. The great church of Antioch, the octagonal 'Golden Church' begun by Constantine and dedicated by Constantius in 341, has been identified as originally standing on the island between the two branches of the Orontes river, close to the palace of Antioch.[53] The 'official' bishop held his services in that church, while his rivals gathered their congregations either in churches in other parts of the city or beyond the walls.[54] In Antioch as elsewhere, however, physical evidence cannot reveal which Christian group may have possessed which church at any given time. Likewise, although our texts describe how Antiochene churches changed hands as the status of rival bishops fluctuated, there is no indication that such changes in ownership led to significant changes either in architectural design[55] or in ceremonial and liturgy.[56] Archaeology and topography thus offer only very limited

[52] The classic, but now extremely dated, work on the Antiochene schism is Cavallera (1905). For a brief introduction to Cavallera's account of the schism and later scholarship see Spoerl (1993).

[53] There is a detailed description of the Great Church of Antioch, derived entirely from texts as no actual remains survive, in Downey (1961) 342–45, who also presents the evidence for the church's location (346–48). See also Deichmann (1972), who challenges the argument that the church was closely connected to the palace, and, for a more recent survey of the archaeological evidence for the church and the Orontes island, Poccardi (2001) 158–60.

[54] In the early 360s, the 'official' bishop in the Great Church on the island was Euzoius, who is regarded by our 'orthodox' sources as an 'Arian'. Meletius, who had been appointed bishop of the city in 360 but then dismissed and replaced by Euzoius because he had opposed the 'Homoian' theology then prevailing in the East, now performed services either in the 'apostolic' church in the old part of the city (Theod. 2.31, 3.4) or outside the city entirely (Soc. 3.9). Paulinus, who led the followers of the former bishop Eustathius (exiled in 327), formed another separate assembly, but was permitted by Euzoius to use a small church within the city (Soc. 3.9).

[55] During the reign of Jovian (363–4), Euzoius was expelled from the Great Church and replaced by Meletius, an order immediately reversed by the 'Homoian' Valens on his accession (Theod. 4.24) with no suggestion in our sources that this in any way required that the church be altered or rededicated. The only evidence for the redecoration of formerly 'Arian' churches comes from long after the 4th c., most famously in the new mosaics of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, and even here it can be argued that the decorations that were removed were replaced for political rather than theological reasons (Von Simson (1948) 71–82).

[56] Liturgical evidence before the late 4th c. is extremely limited, but the use of doctrinal creeds in the liturgy of a standard church service does not appear to have become widespread in the East until the 6th c. and still later in the West (see Kelly (1972) 348–57). In the 4th c., the liturgical role of the creed was primarily baptismal (Kelly (1972) 30–61), and probably marked the only way in which the major Christian groups in Antioch differed in their rite of baptism. On this latter issue see R. Williams (1993), who observes that "Liturgy, like scripture, was a common ground for disputation, and, just as biblical phrases in their pre-controversial innocence could be deployed

assistance in tracing the course of the 4th c. controversies in Antioch, although from near the end of those controversies the remains of the church begun by Bishop Meletius in *ca.* 380 to hold the relics of St Babylas do still survive to symbolise the "return of orthodoxy" that Meletius wished to proclaim.[57]

This absence of specific archaeological evidence for the controversies that are known to have caused divisions within the Antiochene Christian community in the 4th c. can be paralleled from other cities across the empire, notably from the city in which the controversies began, Alexandria.[58] The urban landscape of 4th c. Alexandria is again difficult to trace, for the modern city is built over the ancient site and as yet only a few of the churches named in our texts have been located on the ground.[59] But the literary sources for the Alexandrian Church and its internal conflicts are considerably greater than for Antioch, and this is particularly true with regard to the two individuals on whom I now briefly intend to focus: Arius and Athanasius.

As I have already had cause to observe, modern scholars have become increasingly aware in recent years that the importance of Arius has been much exaggerated in accounts of the controversy that (wrongly) bears his name. Nevertheless, both the beginning and the end of Arius' known career offer a valuable demonstration of how the topographical context of events can indeed influence the development of theological controversies. Alexandria was a very different city to

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by theologians of totally opposed commitments, so could the formulations of public worship" (149). The only group who appear to have followed their own peculiar liturgical and baptismal practices in the 4th c. were the followers of the 'Neo-Arian' Eunomius: R. Williams (1993) 171–77.

[57] The quotation is from Downey (1961) 415. The cruciform Church of St Babylas was erected opposite the main city on the right bank of the Orontes river, possibly on a site where Meletius had held services before his restoration as 'official' bishop in 378. The relics of Babylas, which had been removed in a famous procession from Daphne during the reign of Julian, were brought to the church before 381, when Meletius himself died and was buried alongside the saint (Soz. 7.10). However, the schism between Meletius and the followers of Paulinus had still not yet been resolved, and only came to an end in 414, a union commemorated by a great procession from the church that had been used by Paulinus to the Great Church to which all the 'orthodox' now belonged (Theod. 5.35).

[58] See in particular Haas (1997), although with certain cautions as I have already observed (see n. 45 above). There is also a discussion of developments in 4th c. Alexandria in Alston (2002) 277–92, while for a general account of the Christian controversies and divisions in Egypt in this period see Griggs (1990) 117–69.

[59] For a useful survey of recent archaeological work in Alexandria see McKenzie (2003) and (2007). On the location of Alexandrian churches, see also Martin (1984).

Antioch, in Christian organisation no less than in other aspects of life, and Haas is undoubtedly correct to emphasise that a study of Arius must take into account the environment in which he first began to teach.[60] We know virtually nothing about the early years of Arius' career, but he first emerges clearly in our sources in the later 310s as the presbyter of the Alexandrian parish church of 'Baucalis'.[61] The location of this church cannot be identified with certainty, but as the presbyter of his own church Arius possessed considerable local authority. According to Epiphanius, presbyters in early 4th c. Alexandria possessed unusual independence and were licensed to preach and 'to serve the ecclesiastical needs of the residents in the vicinity of each church'.[62] It was therefore possible for a popular presbyter like Arius to develop a strong local following,[63] and it was correspondingly difficult for the bishop of Alexandria to maintain control over the divided foci of Christian worship within the city.[64]

Despite the assertions of our polemical sources, Arius' initial intention was obviously not to separate himself from the main Christian body and to create a new church under his own leadership. On the contrary, Arius insisted that his teachings represented the traditional

[60] Haas (1997) 268.

[61] Epiph. *Panarion* 69.1.2. For the possible meanings of 'Baucalis' see Pearson (1986) 153 and Haas (1997) 269–70. The church at Baucalis may have been connected to the *martyrium* of St Mark, who according to later sources was executed and buried at 'Boukolou' (*Acts of Mark* 7 (death), 10 (burial)), and although there is no firm evidence for the *martyrium* before the mid-4th c. it is at least plausible that a shrine to St Mark already existed in Arius' own time and would therefore have increased the prestige of Arius' church (Haas (1997) 271; R. Williams (2001) 42–44).

[62] Epiph. *Panarion* 69.1.2. On the unique status of Alexandrian presbyters in the 3rd and early 4th c., see Kemp (1955).

[63] The traditional image of Arius writing theological songs for sailors and millers to popularise his ideas may be somewhat exaggerated, but certainly his *Thalia* was written in verse (see West (1982) and R. Williams (2001) 62–66) and was presumably intended for widespread consumption. It is possible that Arius in fact employed theological chants in much the same manner as Ambrose and John Chrysostom did when they encouraged their supporters through the singing of hymns, in episodes to which I will return later in this paper.

[64] As R. Williams (2001) 42 has observed, the bishop of Alexandria in this period, despite his considerable powers over the rest of the Egyptian church, within his own city was almost a '*primus inter pares*' in his relationship with the parish presbyters. For "the presbyter licensed to expound Scripture in virtue of his ordination and commission to a specific congregation was exercising an authority significantly like that of a bishop" (84–85).

doctrines of the Church, which he believed to be under threat.[65] After his condemnation at the Council of Nicaea he never ceased to appeal for reinstatement and he was eventually restored to communion at the Council of Jerusalem in 335, a restoration that paved the way for the famous events surrounding Arius' death in Constantinople the next year. Athanasius' description of these events is highly problematic,[66] but his account does indicate very clearly the importance in this episode of topography and the ceremonial use of religious space. Arius had attempted to return to Alexandria after the Council of Jerusalem in 335, but the riots this caused led to his recall by the emperor to Constantinople in 336. Constantine now ordered Alexander, the bishop of Constantinople, to receive Arius into communion. The ceremony was to take place the next day in the episcopal church of Hagia Eirene, but before Arius could enter the church he came to a privy and there 'falling headlong he burst asunder [Acts 1:18] … [and] was deprived of both communion and his life'.[67] According to one later church historian, Arius was in fact already on his way to the church in a formal procession with his supporters when he died.[68] It is claimed that the site of his death behind the Forum of Constantine was still pointed out by the 'orthodox' into the 5th c.,[69] until the land was bought by a wealthy 'Arian' who built a house there in order to conceal this place of shame.[70]

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[65] 'Our faith, which we have from our forefathers and which we have also learned from you, holy father' (the opening lines of Arius' 'creedal letter' to Alexander in *ca.* 321, quoted in Ath. *De Synodis* 16).

[66] Athanasius first described the death of Arius in the *De Morte Arii* ('The Letter to Serapion (bishop of Thumis) on the Death of Arius') of *ca.* 339–346 (for the date see Kannengiesser (1982) 992–94) and then again in slightly modified form in chapters 18–19 of his *Encyclical Letter* of 356. Athanasius' account was followed in turn by Ruf. 10.13–14 (wrongly placing Arius' death after that of Constantine); Soc. 1.37–38; Soz. 2.29–30 and Theod. 1.13–14.

[67] Ath. *De Morte Arii* 3; cf. *Encyclical Letter* 19. The death of Arius is explicitly modelled on the Scriptural fate of Judas, one of several reasons why modern historians have been reluctant to accept Athanasius' account at face value (R. Williams (2001) 80–81; Hanson (1988) 264–65). Several later Germanic 'Arian' rulers are alleged in their turn to have died in the same manner as their 'father' Arius, including most famously Theoderic the Ostrogoth (Anon. Val. 95).

[68] Ruf. 10.14. Soc. 1.38 also refers to Arius dying while he was parading with his followers, but places this event on the evening before he was due to come to the church. There is no mention of any such procession in either of Athanasius' accounts of Arius' death.

[69] Soc. 1.38.

[70] Soz. 2.30.

Athanasius, whose account of Arius' death I have just quoted, was himself in exile in 336 after his condemnation at the Council of Tyre in 335, and although he returned to Alexandria on Constantine's death in 337 he was forced to leave the city again in early 339. His replacement was Gregory the Cappadocian, a man whom Athanasius inevitably denounced as an 'Arian'. In the *Encyclical Letter* of 339 that he wrote to defend his own legitimacy as the true bishop of Alexandria against this new rival, Athanasius again attests vividly to the importance placed on control of sacred topography in such a period of controversy. Supported by the Prefect Philagrius, Gregory is alleged to have rallied gangs of Jews and pagans who burnt one church and assaulted Athanasius' followers, then attacked the church in which Athanasius himself resided, forcing him to flee.[71] Athanasius' account is extremely tendentious, for the same elements of the abuse of monks and virgins and the alliance of the 'heretics' with Jews and pagans recur every time Athanasius denounces the violence of his opponents,[72] and he does not actually identify the churches involved in the events that he describes. However, it is probable that the church that was burnt was the Church of Dionysius, whose location in Alexandria is unknown,[73] while the cathedral church in 339 from which Athanasius himself was expelled was the Church of Theonas,[74] located at the north-western end of the city. It would therefore appear that the new bishop, Gregory, was unsurprisingly attempting to establish his authority by occupying the main churches within the city during the great

[71] Ath. *Encyclical Letter* 3–5.

[72] On the rhetorical presentation of 4th c. Christian violence see McLynn (1992), and on the alleged alliance between 'Arians' and pagans see D. Williams (1997), esp. 181–84 on Athanasius. In this instance, Athanasius also describes the events of 339 again later in his *Historia Arianorum*, when in addition to the crimes described above the 'Arians' are reported to have 'so persecuted the bishop's aunt, that even when she died he [Gregory] would not suffer her to be buried' (*Hist. Ar.* 13)—a personal outrage that strangely Athanasius never even mentioned in his original version of those events.

[73] Soc. 2.11. Interestingly, the eastern Letter of the Council of Serdica in 343 that condemned Athanasius (CSEL 65.55.5–7) declares that it was he who hired the pagans to burn this church!

[74] *Festal Index* 11.

Easter celebrations,[75] while he also took over the major civic functions of the episcopate, particularly the distribution of bread.[76]

Gregory died in 345, and when Athanasius returned to Alexandria once more in 346 it was to a ceremonial welcome that is reported to have begun a hundred miles from the city[77] and which Gregory of Nazianzus later likened to Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.[78] During the following decade Athanasius then oversaw the further expansion of the Christian topography of Alexandria. It was apparently in these years that the Caesareum, the imperial cult temple on the harbour in the centre of the city, was fully converted into the new great church of Alexandria.[79] At any rate, the church was already completed when it was used by Athanasius to celebrate Easter in *ca.* 351,[80] for which action Athanasius had to explain himself to the emperor Constantius, as the emperor had financed the construction of the church and the church itself had not yet been dedicated.[81] This was one of the complaints which led to Athanasius' third exile in 356, an exile preceded by an attack on the Church of Theonas in which Athanasius was

[75] According to Athanasius (*Encyclical Letter* 4–5), one church was attacked during Lent (the Church of Dionysius), and another (the Church of Quirinus, according to *Hist. Ar.* 10) on Easter Sunday (April 15, the day before Athanasius fled the city). Easter was the time for baptismal ceremonies, and although Athanasius (*Encyclical Letter* 5) declares that the 'orthodox' should avoid baptism at the hands of an 'Arian', the ceremony in Alexandria, as also in Antioch (see n. 56 above), probably underwent no significant change with the change in episcopal regime.

[76] Athanasius and his supporters repeatedly complain that his opponents desire to take the distribution of bread and oil away from the 'orthodox' and give them instead to the 'Arians' (*Encyclical Letter* 4, *Apol. c. Ar.* 18 (the Alexandrian *Encyclical Letter* of 338) and *Hist. Ar.* 13, 31, 61). Such a charge might seem minor alongside the allegations of violence and murder that Athanasius brings against his foes, but its significance should not be underestimated, for control of the charitable duties of the Church within a given see was both a means to rally support and an important official indication of episcopal legitimacy (Brown (1992) 90 and 96–97; Haas (1997) 248–56; Liebeschuetz (2001) 141–42).

[77] *Festal Index* 18.

[78] Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21: 'On the Great Athanasius' 27–29. For the parallels between the reception of Athanasius in 346 and an imperial *adventus*, see MacCormack (1981) 64–66.

[79] The exact date when the conversion of the Caesareum began remains uncertain. The 7th c. writer John of Nikiu places the building of the church under Constantine, but no earlier source supports this claim and it seems more probable that Epiph. *Panarion* 69.2.2–3 is correct in stating that the work was begun under Constantius while Gregory, Athanasius' first replacement, was in office (339–345).

[80] Again, the exact year in which this Easter celebration was held is a subject of debate. The year 351 adopted here is that proposed by Barnes (1993) 302 n. 4.

[81] Ath. *Apol. Const.* 6–11; 14–18; see Barnes (1993) 113–14.

presiding over a vigil on the night of 8/9 February 356. Athanasius provides two highly rhetorical descriptions of this attack and his own flight[82] as well as the account of his congregation which he quotes,[83] and the differences between these reports, although written by contemporaries favourable to each other and apparently eye-witnesses to the same event, underline the difficulties involved in any objective analysis of the evidence offered by such tendentious sources.[84] Yet whatever may actually have occurred on the night of 8/9 February 356, the purpose of the attack was presumably once again to secure control of the episcopal church of Alexandria in preparation for the arrival of Athanasius' new replacement, George of Cappadocia. This was followed a few months later by a further assault upon the new great church of the Caesareum.[85]

The reconstruction of the 4th c. ecclesiastical and topographical rivalries that I have traced above in Antioch and Alexandria derives almost exclusively from literary rather than material evidence. To a degree, this may reflect the limitations of archaeology as a source for conflicts that were primarily doctrinal in nature. However, in light of the interpretation of the 4th c. controversies that I have presented here it may equally be argued that such an absence of material evidence is precisely what we should expect to find. As I have emphasised throughout this paper, to view the 4th c. controversies solely in terms of two distinct factions is a product of the polemical nature of our literary sources. What we see in Antioch and Alexandria is not a conflict between separate 'orthodox' and 'Arian' churches, but a competition between a number of rival groups for control of the one 'catholic and orthodox Church' that all those groups claimed to represent. That

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[82] Ath. *Apol. Const.* 25; *Apol. de fuga* 24–25.

[83] The letter of 'The People of the Catholic Church in Alexandria, which is under the most reverend Bishop Athanasius', addressed to Constantius and attached at the end of Athanasius' *Historia Arianorum* (*Hist. Ar.* 81).

[84] Unlike Athanasius' own accounts, the letter of his congregation makes no reference to 'Arians' as those responsible for the attack, and whereas Athanasius claims to have first exhorted his followers to leave and only then withdrawn himself his followers omit his exhortations and merely state that after being seized he 'fell into a state of insensibility and, appearing as if dead, he disappeared'. For further discussion of these differing reports, see Gwynn (2007) 162–64.

[85] Athanasius presents this attack once again as inspired by the 'Arians' in alliance with the pagans of Alexandria (*Hist. Ar.* 54–57). The episode in question has been studied by Haas (1997) 281–86, but his adoption of Athanasius' entire account as factual and impartial does not allow sufficiently for the potential distortions of our sources, as Haas himself has since acknowledged (Haas (2004) 222–23).

competition particularly centred on control over major church buildings (which in the 4th c. were frequently new imperial foundations, including the Golden Church in Antioch and the Caesareum in Alexandria), and these sites thus became the focus of episcopal activity, ceremonial processions and potentially violence. Yet the rival congregations were by no means as clearly defined as our polemical literary sources would like to suggest and as they competed for the same buildings and shared the same rites they cannot be traced through differences in iconography or architecture. Only towards the end of the 4th c. and above all in the 5th and 6th c. Germanic kingdoms in the West do we see the emergence of distinct Christian groups which have left archaeological as well as textual evidence for their separate identities.

The 'Arian Controversy' after 381

In 381 the Council of Constantinople upheld and defined the Nicene Creed as the orthodox faith of the Christian Church. Of course, this is not to say that all theological conflict ceased with the conclusion of this Council. But it is true that the creedal statement of Constantinople marks the culmination of the particular debates that had originated in Arius' dispute with Alexander of Alexandria, and that the focus of doctrinal argument in the Greek East now began to shift increasingly towards the questions regarding the nature of Christ that would come to a head in the next century. Nevertheless, Christian groups still existed whom their opponents would brand as 'Arian', particularly the Goths and other Germanic peoples, and the years between 381 and 400 saw a significant shift in the nature of the divisions within 4th c. Christianity that I have so far described.

The initial evidence for this shift lies in the laws of Theodosius I by which that emperor sought to enforce the verdict of the Council of Constantinople. There had been earlier imperial laws against 'heretics' from the reign of Constantine onwards, but the Theodosian laws are more systematic and also more precise in their definitions of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy'. The first of these laws, passed in February 380 before the Council met, defined as 'orthodox' all those who shared 'the religion that is followed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria', which is to believe in the equal majesty of the Holy Trinity. 'Those persons who follow this rule shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom we adjudge

demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas'.[86] Theodosius repeated these sentiments in a second law immediately after the Council in July 381, with a longer revised register of those bishops whose communion now represented the proof of 'Catholic orthodoxy'.[87]

In the years 381–383 Theodosius also laid down a considerable body of legislation directed against specific activities that were now forbidden to 'heretics'.[88] These laws are highly relevant to the present paper, for they are particularly concerned with questions of topography, including the ownership of property, the location of churches and ceremonial conduct. Again, these laws had begun even before the Council of Constantinople met, for a law of January 381 already forbids 'Arians' and other 'heretics' to gather within towns.[89] 'Arians' were not to build churches and any such church was to be confiscated,[90] nor were they to gather in their assemblies.[91] 'The vicious doctrines hateful to God and man . . . shall not arrogate to themselves the right to assemble congregations or to establish churches, either by public or private undertakings, within the localities of the cities and of the fields and of the villas. They shall not practice the ritual performance of their own perfidy or the ceremonies of their dire communion; they shall not usurp and have any ordinances for creating priests'.[92] The prohibitions of these laws were further expanded in the legislation of Theodosius' later years and under his sons,[93] and at least in theory the true 'Catholic Church' was now visibly distinct from

[86] *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.2.

[87] *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.3.

[88] For a more detailed account of the legislation only summarised very briefly here, see King (1961) 53–59 and Liebeschuetz (1990) 146–53.

[89] *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.6.

[90] *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.8 in July 381; cf. 16.5.15 (388), 16.5.30 (402).

[91] *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.11 in July 383; cf. 16.5.20 (391), 16.5.26 (395).

[92] *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.12 in December 383; cf. 16.5.21 (392).

[93] 'We renew by Our decree all penalties and all punishments that were established by the sanction of Our Father of sainted memory against the obstinate spirit of the heretics' (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.25, March 395). This is one of the first laws of Arcadius after Theodosius' death in January 395. The law goes on to declare that 'we condemn with special mention the perfidious mind and the most vicious sect of the Eunomians', the so-called 'Anomoians' who taught that the Son was 'unlike' (*anomoios*) the Father. As Liebeschuetz (1990) 148–49 observes, this sect were a particular target of imperial legislation in the period 387–423, perhaps because their extreme doctrinal position was one that all other Christians, even those like the Goths who rejected the Nicene-Constantinipolitan creed of 381, could unite against.

the gatherings of the 'Arians' who were excluded from the cities of the empire.

Of course, the degree to which these impressive laws ever had a practical effect must remain to a large extent a matter of conjecture.[94] So-called 'Arians' were allowed to gather outside the gates of Constantinople in their own meeting places and under their own clergy, and indeed still assembled within the city on feast days when they then walked in procession out to their churches.[95] Demophilus, the 'Arian' bishop of Constantinople, withdrew to the suburbs after refusing the demand of Theodosius that he endorse the Nicene Creed on 26 November 380.[96] He and his successors continued to worship in specific buildings and were given permission to build new churches outside the walls.[97] Similar conditions presumably also prevailed elsewhere in the empire, and the situation was thus never as clear on the ground as the official language of the laws would like to suggest. Nevertheless, those laws do represent not only an ideological statement of the polarisation of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' that I have presented hitherto as a polemical construct, but also an active campaign to impose that polarisation upon the physical environment of the cities. That this campaign did have some genuine effect we can see in the new conflicts that developed in the years after 381. This shift is particularly visible in Constantinople itself with the involvement of the 'Arian' Goths, to which I will return shortly below. But the changed situation is already visible in the 380s in the western imperial capital of Milan, in the role played by the Bishop Ambrose in the famous 'Siege of the Basilica' of 386.

Ambrose of Milan was elected bishop by popular acclaim in 374.[98] His predecessor, Auxentius, had been a leading supporter of the

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[94] Liebeschuetz (1990) 152: "When we examine the practical consequences of so much religious legislation, it becomes clear that much of it was not enforced". For a discussion of the limited effect of such laws, see also Hunt (1993), esp. 155–57.

[95] Soc. 6.8; Soz. 8.7 (see further below). There was still an 'Arian chapel' in Constantinople for Nestorius to destroy immediately after his consecration as Bishop of Constantinople in 428 (Soc. 7.29).

[96] Soc. 5.7; Soz. 7.5.

[97] Soc. 5.20. In the early 5th c. when the 'Arians' were themselves divided over further questions of doctrine, 'Dorotheus and his followers retained possession of the houses of prayer, while Marinus, and those who seceded with him, erected new edifices in which to hold their own churches' (Soz. 7.17; cf. Soc. 5.23).

[98] For the best modern account of Ambrose's career, rightly emphasising the distortions created by our 'orthodox' sources and the difficulties raised by labels such as 'Arian', see McLynn (1994). On Ambrose's involvement in the theological controversies of this period, see also D. Williams (1995).

'Homoian' doctrine in contrast to the Nicene faith which Ambrose himself upheld, and the new bishop had to work hard to establish his own position. Indeed, in *ca.* 378–380 Ambrose even had to allow the temporary surrender of a basilica to his opponents, an action that stands in stark contrast to his defence of what may have been the same basilica in 386.[99] Finally, with the support of the emperor Gratian, Ambrose summoned his own council at Aquileia in 381 where (through some rather dubious tactics) he condemned his opponents as 'Arian' and declared the Nicene Creed as the orthodox faith.[100] Through this and other measures Ambrose reinforced his position, and he was largely secure when, in 385–6, he faced the challenge of Justina, the mother of the new young emperor Valentinian II. As is well known, in January 386 Justina inspired a law allowing those whom Ambrose regarded as 'Arians' freedom to worship, and demanded that the bishop give up a basilica church for their assemblies. Ambrose resisted the empress' demand by occupying the requested church, the Basilica Portiana which stood just outside the city walls.[101] There he preached and his followers sang hymns until, after two short 'sieges' by the imperial garrison (including Goths), Justina backed down.[102]

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[99] Amb. *De spiritu sancto* 1.1.19–21, an episode discussed in detail by D. Williams (1993).

[100] See McLynn (1994) 169–84; D. Williams (1995) 124–37. Ambrose excluded from the Council the eastern bishops of Illyricum, who were strongly 'Homoian', and ignored the repeated objections of his opponents that they were not 'Arian' and indeed knew nothing of Arius or his writings.

[101] The identity of the Basilica Portiana has been the subject of considerable debate. Perhaps the most attractive suggestion is that the Basilica Portiana is in fact the still extant church of San Lorenzo, located just outside the city walls and close to the probable position of the imperial palace in Milan (Krautheimer (1983) 89–91), but this identification has been challenged by recent studies which place the construction of San Lorenzo later than the basilica siege (Lavan (2003) 175–76). For a summary of the different arguments see McLynn (1994) 174–79, while there is a survey of the much-disputed chronology and topography of the entire episode in Lenox-Cunningham (1982).

[102] The main sources for this episode very much represent the Ambrosian viewpoint, being Ambrose's own letters to emperor Valentinian II (*Ep.* 75) and to his sister Marcellina (*Ep.* 76) (these are letters 21 and 20 respectively in the Maurist collection) along with *c. Aux.* (*Ep.* 75a) which he preached inside the basilica and the *Life of Ambrose* (chapter 13) written by Paulinus the Deacon and based on Ambrose's account. There is also a brief reference by Aug. *Conf.* 9.7.15, who was living in Milan at this time and whose mother Monica (though not Augustine himself) was with Ambrose during the siege. Ambrose's letter to his sister describes the first siege, which took place during Holy Week in 386, while *Ep.* 75 and the sermon (*Ep.* 75a) refer to the second siege which occurred slightly later. For modern accounts of these events, see McLynn (1994) 170–208; D. Williams (1995) 210–17.

Two important conclusions need to be drawn from this very brief account of the basilica siege. First, although the law of Justina is frequently described as a decree in favour of the 'Arians', here as elsewhere such terminology merely reflects the polemical language of our 'orthodox' sources. The law itself, as indeed we would expect, says nothing regarding Arius or Arianism, but instead invokes the Councils of Ariminum in 359 and Constantinople in 360 which declared that the Son was *homoios* ('like') the Father.[103] This may seem obvious, but, as I have argued throughout this paper, to follow the language of the polemic inevitably distorts our understanding of the events of this period, not least in this instance because it was through branding his opponents as 'heretics' that Ambrose sought to justify his apparently treasonable actions. Secondly, while the 'Siege of the Basilica' to an extent represents the same interaction of theology and civic politics that we have seen earlier in Antioch and Alexandria, the nature of the conflict in Milan in 386 was very different. Ambrose's struggle against Justina was not over who should be the bishop of Milan, or who should control the episcopal church within the city, but over whether a separate minority Christian group should have the right to worship in a public church at all, even if that church was outside the walls.[104] This was the claim that for Ambrose had to be rejected, a victory that was reinforced later that same year by Ambrose's discovery of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius and their triumphal public procession to the newly completed Basilica Ambrosiana.[105]

The situation in Constantinople in the 380s resembled to a considerable degree that in the contemporary Milan of Ambrose. While it is not entirely accurate to refer to the eastern capital at this time as an

[103] 'We bestow the right of assembly upon those persons who believe according to the doctrines which in the times of Constantius of sacred memory were decreed as those that would endure forever, when the priests had been called together from all the Roman world and the faith was set forth at the Council of Ariminum (…) a faith which was also confirmed by the Council of Constantinople' (*Cod. Theod.* 16.1.4).

[104] This restriction of the 'Arians' of Milan to worship only in private houses was well emphasised by Maier (1994) and contrasts vividly to Ambrose's great program of public church building around the city (described by Krautheimer (1983) 78–81).

[105] For the famous story of the discovery and translation of the relics, see Amb. *Ep.* 22, Paul. *V. Amb.* 14, and Aug. *Conf.* 9.7.16, and the modern accounts in McLynn (1994) 209–15 and D. Williams (1995) 218–23. It is just possible that the Brescia casket was even intended to hold these relics (see Watson (1981) 290–91, whose association of that reliquary casket with Ambrose was discussed earlier in this paper), although there is little in the iconography of the casket to support such a claim.

'Arian city', as a number of modern scholars have done,[106] it is true that when Theodosius I entered the city in November 380, Constantinople had been ruled for over 40 years by emperors (notably Constantius and Valens) who did not accept the Nicene Creed as their standard of 'orthodoxy'. Supporters of Nicaea were thus certainly a minority within the city, and when shortly after his arrival Theodosius installed the Nicene Gregory of Nazianzus as Bishop of Constantinople, the new bishop required an armed guard.[107] Gregory's position was also unstable due to opposition from other Nicene bishops and during the Council of 381 he resigned, to be replaced by the senator Nectarius.[108] As we have seen, Theodosius then enforced the verdict of that Council through his laws against the 'Arians', and the victory of Nicene orthodoxy was also celebrated in the East, as in Milan, by the movement of relics into Constantinople.[109] Much still remained to be done, however, when Nectarius died in 397, to be replaced by the Antiochene priest John Chrysostom.

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[106] "An Arian city" (Liebeschuetz (1990) 163; cf. 158–59); "A predominantly Arian city" (Kelly (1995) 104). Such statements derive primarily from the emphasis of Gregory of Nazianzus on the smallness of his flock in Constantinople (*Or.* 34.7, 42.2) and from the rhetorical statement of Gregory of Nyssa (*de deit. Fil.* (PG 46.557)) that 'Arian' catchphrases could be heard on the streets of the city in 381. However, while it seems certain that the Nicene congregation of Gregory of Nazianzus was indeed a small minority of the Christians of Constantinople, to therefore describe the city as 'Arian' is once again to follow the polarised polemic of our sources which lump together all those who rejected the 'orthodox' position under one collective label. Thus Liebeschuetz (1990) 147 speaks of the 'Arians' as "themselves divided into a number of sects who differed among themselves about the relationship of God the Father to Jesus the Son", when those 'sects' in fact represent distinct branches of Christian belief, not divided factions of a single 'Arian Church'.

[107] For Gregory's own account of the tense situation in which he found himself in Constantinople, see his apologetic *Carmen de Vita Sua*, esp. 654–78 and 1325–45, and also his *Or.* 33. The small chapel in which Gregory had first preached in Constantinople, the Anastasia, would become an important topographical symbol of Nicene orthodoxy in the city (Snee (1998)).

[108] Soc. 5.7–8; Soz. 7.7–8.

[109] Immediately after the Council, Theodosius brought back to Constantinople the remains of Paul, a former bishop of the city exiled under Constantius, and had them buried in the church originally built by Paul's successor and rival Macedonius (Soc. 5.9, Soz. 7.10). Slightly later, he also completed the translation to Constantinople of the head of John the Baptist which had been begun unsuccessfully by the 'Homoian' Valens (Soz. 7.21). On these two episodes as symbolic of the 'victory of orthodoxy', see Liebeschuetz (1990) 164–65.

Chrysostom, like Ambrose, was a figure never far from controversy.[110] He had previously preached against the radical 'Anomoians' in Antioch,[111] and it is possible that he was brought to Constantinople to continue the campaign to establish Nicene orthodoxy in the capital.[112] In Constantinople, however, John preferred to carry out this campaign less through preaching than through public ceremonies and processions.[113] This was a necessary response to those Christians who now had to worship outside the walls, who on feast days 'assembled by night in the public porticoes, and were divided into bands, so that they sang antiphonally, for they had composed certain refrains which reflected their own dogmas. At the break of day they marched in procession, singing these hymns, to the places in which they held their churches'.[114] Chrysostom organised his own processions, aided by the resources of the empress Eudoxia, and after one of the empress' eunuchs was injured in a riot that broke out between the rival participants the emperor Arcadius declared that only the Catholic Church would be permitted to hold such public processions. This use of processions and hymn-singing to establish the claims of 'orthodoxy' inevitably recalls Ambrose's actions in Milan, and here again we see in Chrysostom's time a far more visible division between distinct Christian groups than we saw earlier in the 4th c. But there was also a further factor at work in Constantinople which had played only a minor role in Ambrose's Milan, and this was the presence of the Goths.

The conversion of the Goths to Christianity was a long and complex process, for different Gothic groups converted at different times and to different forms of Christian belief. However, for the purposes of this paper, I am concerned only with those Goths who crossed the Danube

[110] For recent studies of his turbulent career, see Liebeschuetz (1990) and Kelly (1995).

[111] Joh. Chrys. Homilies 1–10 *Contra Anomaeos*.

[112] Liebeschuetz (1990) 166–67; Kelly (1995) 105.

[113] Chrysostom did continue to preach against the 'Anomoians' in Constantinople (Homilies 11–12 *Contra Anomaeos*) and also includes polemical references against 'Arianism' in other sermons, but not in any systematic fashion (see Liebeschuetz (1990) 166–67; Kelly (1995) 134).

[114] Soz. 8.8; cf. Soc. 6.8. The exact doctrinal position of those described here by the ecclesiastical historians as 'Arians' is unclear. They are said to have attacked those who upheld the consubstantiality of Father and Son, asking 'where are those who say that the Three Persons are but one Power?', but hostility to the Nicene Creed as apparently denying the individual identities of the Trinity was by no means restricted to a single group whom we can define as 'Arian'.

in 376 and established themselves on Roman soil. These Goths had been influenced by Christianity before they entered the empire, notably through the efforts of Ulfila from the early 340s onwards,[115] but the crucial event in the Gothic conversion would seem to have been their agreement with the emperor Valens in 376. For it was as part of the terms by which they were allowed into the empire that the Gothic leaders agreed to abandon their traditional religion and to accept the form of Christianity patronised by that emperor.[116]

Ulfila and Valens both upheld as orthodox not the Nicene Creed but the 'Homoian' doctrine laid down by the Councils of Ariminum and Constantinople in 359–360 which declared the Son to be 'God from God, like unto the Father who begat Him'. Thus the Goths came to be described as 'Arian' by their opponents and so in turn by the majority of modern scholars. Such a description is both pejorative and theologically inaccurate,[117] as I have already observed, and a better label is perhaps 'Gothic Christianity', for the Gothic churches not only possessed their own creed, but their own clergy, language and liturgy. This again is not a perfect label, for there were Catholic Goths who did not worship within the main Gothic church.[118] But at least such terminology better reflects the role that their unique brand of Christianity played in defining and preserving the distinct identity of the Goths within the Roman empire. Despite the recurring emphasis upon 'Gothic Arianism' in our sources there was nothing specifically 'Gothic'

[115] The two most important primary sources for the career of Ulfila are Philostorgius (2.35) and a letter by Ulfila's pupil Auxentius of Durostorum (preserved in the *scholia* on the Council of Aquileia in 381 collected in the 5th c. by Maximinus). For a convenient translation and introduction to these texts, see Heather and Matthews (1991) 133–53, while there is an older account of Ulfila's career and teachings in Thompson (1966) xiii–xxiii.

[116] For a discussion of the complex sources for the conversion of the Goths and the conclusion that I have followed here, see Heather (1986). Heather rejects the earlier argument of Thompson (1966) 78–93, who placed the Gothic conversion in 382–395.

[117] Contrary to Thompson (1966) xviii and more recently Wolfram (1997) 309, the theology of Ulfila as described in the letter of his pupil Auxentius of Durostorum does not go back directly to Arius (Heather and Matthews (1991) 138–39). This misconception is in part due to the polemic of the 'orthodox' writers of the late 4th and 5th c. who in their desire to condemn the 'Homoians' as 'Arians' wrongly attributed the doctrine that the Son is 'like' the Father to Arius himself (see for example Filastrius of Brescia, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 66.1–2).

[118] There was a church for Catholic Goths in Constantinople at the time of Chrysostom (see further below), while later the mother of Theoderic the Ostrogoth, Erelieva, is reported to have become a Catholic and to have taken the baptismal name Eusebia (Anon. Val. 58).

about the beliefs that the Goths held, and the distinct language and liturgy of Gothic worship were at least as important as doctrine in reinforcing Gothic identity.[119] In any case, both by theology and by ethnicity and language these 'Gothic Christians' do represent a separate church which worshipped entirely apart from the 'orthodox' congregations among whom they lived.[120] The involvement of the Goths thus inevitably altered the nature of the controversies that divided eastern Christians after 381, as can be seen from the events in Constantinople at the very end of the 4th c. in the confrontation of John Chrysostom and the Gothic general Gainas.

Under Theodosius I, the Gothic Christians who settled in Constantinople received a certain degree of "*de facto* toleration",[121] but they were still bound by his law that non-Catholic worship had to be conducted outside the city. The only Gothic church within the walls was Catholic, where Chrysostom is known to have preached through a translator.[122] This situation appears to have been a source of discontent at least for some leading Goths, and that discontent came to a head during Gainas' attempt to seize power in 400. The coup of Gainas is a complex episode that has received various modern interpretations,[123] but what is not in doubt is that one of the demands that Gainas made to the imperial government was that the non-Catholic

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[119] Liebeschuetz (1990) 49–50; Heather (1991) 188–89; Wiles (1996) 40–51. 'Gothic Christianity' seems to me to better express this distinctive Gothic identity than the legal-religious conception of a '*Lex Gothica*' suggested by Wolfram (1988) 14–17.

[120] Although I have highlighted here the separation of the 'orthodox' and 'Gothic' churches, Ulfila at least certainly intended his teachings to represent the one true and universal Christian message, as is emphasised in the Letter of Auxentius 33[53] (see Thompson (1966) 119–20; Heather and Matthews (1991) 152 n. 38). Nor do I wish to suggest any inherent inferiority in the theological sophistication and understanding of Gothic Christians as has too often been implied, most obviously by Thompson (1966) 117: "no characteristic of Germanic Arian theology is more marked than its aridity, its refusal to speculate, its pedestrian earthbound barrenness and lack of originality" (cf. Wolfram (1997) 78).

[121] Heather (1991) 182. Liebeschuetz (1990) 148 plausibly suggests that this tolerance may reflect the imperial government's need not to alienate its own Gothic soldiers.

[122] Theod. 5.30. One of the Homilies that Chrysostom preached to the Catholic Goths survives as PG 63.499–511, although it is not certain if this sermon was actually preached in their church. For the possible location of that church, see Snee (1998) 177–79.

[123] See most recently the contrasting views of Liebeschuetz (1990), who argues that Gainas temporarily occupied Constantinople, and of Alan Cameron and Long (1993), who deny that such an occupation took place. The diverse interpretations reflect the difficulties raised by our primary sources for this episode, for Soc. 6.6, Soz. 8.4 and Theod. 5.32 all wrote their ecclesiastical histories some years after the events (and

Goths should also be permitted a church inside the city.[124] Even more clearly than in Milan in 386, what was at stake in Constantinople in 400 was thus not the issue of who should control the 'universal Church', but the right of a Christian minority, distinct from the 'orthodox' mainstream both theologically and ethnically, to public worship. Like Ambrose, John Chrysostom refused that request, causing Gainas to back down even before he was driven from the capital and later killed.[125]

The failure of Gainas' coup brings the 4th c. to an end and points onwards to the doctrinal and ethnic tensions that would continue to divide Christians, particularly in the West, throughout the 5th c. While new theological controversies would develop in the Greek East, the distinctive 'Gothic Church' would remain an essential feature of both the Visigothic kingdom in Gaul and Spain (until the eventual conversion of Reccared to Catholicism in 587) and the Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy (until its destruction by Justinian). In these kingdoms, as also in Vandal Africa, we do see a polarisation between separate churches, created by the emergence of a people whose distinctive Christianity was an important component of their construction of their own identity. This polarisation is very different from the division between 'orthodox' and 'Arian' which our polemical sources seek to impose upon the 4th c., and in this new context archaeology can indeed play a greater role in revealing the art, architecture and religious topography of 'Gothic' and 'Catholic' Christianity. But that is a subject for another paper.[126]

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after the rehabilitation of John Chrysostom), while the major eyewitness source, the *De Providentia* of Synesius of Cyrene, is allegorical and difficult to interpret or date.

[124] According to Soz. 8.4, Gainas declared that 'it was neither just nor proper that, while he was general of the Roman troops, he should be compelled to retire outside the walls of the city when he wished to engage in prayer'. Theod. 5.32 gives an entire dialogue between Gainas and John Chrysostom, in which Gainas is attributed with the same argument. This at least reflects how the later ecclesiastical historians understood Gainas' motivation, although I am less convinced than Kelly (1995) 157 that the exchange recorded by Theodoret "retains a remarkable flavour of verisimilitude".

[125] Chrysostom's stand against Gainas is much emphasised by both Soz. 8.4 and Theod. 5.32, but not by Soc. 6.6, whose attitude to John was more ambivalent, or by John's biographer Palladius (who entirely omits this episode from his *Dialogue*). This may indicate that Sozomen and Theodoret were concerned to counter charges against Chrysostom that he had been excessively pro-Gothic (Liebeschuetz (1990) 190; Alan Cameron and Long (1993) 235) or that he had been involved in the burning of the Catholic Gothic church and the massacre of 7000 Goths at the time of Gainas' retreat (Liebeschuetz (1990) 190–91).

[126] See the contribution of Ward-Perkins in this volume.

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WHERE IS THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND ICONOGRAPHY OF GERMANIC ARIANISM?

Bryan Ward-Perkins

Abstract

This article examines the evidence for Germanic 'Arianism' in the exceptionally well preserved buildings and mosaics of Ravenna. Despite theological differences, Arian iconography appears to be almost identical to that of the 'Catholics' (e.g. in depictions of Christ in S. Apollinare Nuovo and the Arian Baptistery). Different attitudes to God the Son are only really apparent when supported by texts. However, there are clear material traces of Catholic triumphalism after the defeat of the Arian Goths; and we should not assume that there were no strongly held differences of view, just because the iconography of the two sects is so similar.

'Arianism', as David Gwynn explains in his article in this volume, never really existed, except in the eyes of its rivals and detractors. It is an inaccurate, but convenient, blanket term to describe the beliefs of a diverse body of Christians who held to varying degrees a particular conception of the Trinity, and especially of God the Son—arguing, with considerable scriptural support, that he was different in nature to God the Father, and a somewhat subordinate power. The people who held views of this kind believed themselves to be the Orthodox and Catholic (i.e. Universal) Church. But they were lumped together, and branded as 'Arians' (after Arius of Alexandria, condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325), by the Christians whose doctrine eventually triumphed—that Son and Father shared the same nature, and were absolutely equal within the Trinity. Although the terminology is one-sided and deceptively homogenising, I shall, for the sake of convenience, continue to call the Christian group I am interested in here the 'Arians', and give the privileged label 'Catholics' to those whose views prevailed in the end.

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There were, as has been explained,[1] two main phases of 'Arianism'. The first came in the 4th c. and very nearly triumphed as the orthodoxy of the empire, but was eventually defeated, primarily by the rise of the passionately Catholic Theodosian dynasty at the end of the century. A second and distinct phase began in the 5th c., and affected primarily the western provinces of the empire. It came about because almost all of the Germanic peoples who invaded and settled the West—including the Burgundians, the Vandals, the Sueves, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths and the Lombards—happened to espouse a particular form of Christianity, usually described as 'Homoian', which the Catholic Christians of the West regarded as Arian. This phase came to an end in the 6th and 7th c., with the Byzantine conquest of Vandal Africa and Ostrogothic Italy (followed by an enforced re-imposition of Catholicism), and with the eventual voluntary rejection of Arianism by the Burgundians, the Sueves, the Visigoths and the Lombards. It is on this latter phase, which can be termed 'Germanic Arianism', that I shall concentrate here—partly because this will complement the focus of David Gwynn's article; but mainly because it is from this period that the best material evidence survives.[2]

There is no doubt at all—from the evidence of written texts—that there should be plenty of material evidence for Arianism, because the Arians, like the Catholics, needed and used things that leave material traces: churches, liturgical fittings, and religious art. There is a plentiful archaeology and iconography of Christianity, so the same should be true for one of its most important sub-sets, Arianism. Indeed, we know from textual evidence that Catholics and Arians often clashed over the possession of physical objects: for instance, over the control of existing churches (as at Milan in the 380s), and the graves of martyrs (as at Mérida, towards the end of the 6th c.).[3]

Not only should the archaeology and iconography of Arianism exist, they certainly do as well, given that large numbers of Arian churches must have been excavated, particularly in North Africa, or are still

[1] See Gwynn 229–33.

[2] There is a useful, short and general account of Germanic Arianism in Wiles (1996) 40–51.

[3] For Ambrose and the dispute at Milan: see David Gwynn's article above 253–5; and McLynn (1994) 174–96. For disputes over the possession of the church and tunic of St. Eulalia of Mérida: *Lives of the Fathers of Merida* 78–82 (5.5), 84 (5.6.12), and 97 (5.6.16).

standing today—most famously, in Ravenna. The problem for us is not a lack of material evidence, but a lack of evidence that we can identify as specifically 'Arian', or indeed as specifically 'Catholic', rather than more generally as 'Christian'.[4] Certainly, in terms of plan and liturgical fixtures, which are what archaeologists normally have as evidence, no reliable differences between Arian and Catholic churches have ever been detected.[5] Indeed, the fact that Arians and Catholics were seemingly happy to take over each other's churches shows that there were no macroscopic differences, in terms of architecture and fittings, between the two groups, and perhaps no microscopic ones either. Procopius tells a story, that illustrates this point perfectly, set in Carthage at the time of the Byzantine defeat of the Vandals in September 533. The Arian Vandals, who had earlier taken over the church of the local martyr Cyprian, had decked it out with its finest ornaments and treasures in preparation for the feast of the saint on the 14th of the month. But when the Vandal army was defeated at the battle of Ad Decimum on that same day, the Arian clergy fled, and the Catholics re-took possession of the church. To celebrate the festival, they simply lit all the lamps, which stood ready, and proceeded with the Mass.[6]

To search for differences we therefore have to turn to the finer details of material evidence, in particular to religious art. Here the focus has to be on Italy, and specifically on Ravenna, with its Arian Ostrogothic court and predominantly Catholic population, and with its uniquely well-preserved artistic heritage of the 5th and early 6th c. Outside Ravenna, we have only very patchy evidence of Arian church decoration: a mosaic, with Christ flanked by the twelve Apostles, set up by the Germanic general Ricimer in the apse of an Arian church in Rome in 460/72, which was destroyed at the end of the 16th c. but drawn before its destruction; and a major cycle of mosaics in the

[4] There is, for instance, no entry for 'Arian' in the excellent index of Frend (1996).

[5] The impossibility of identifying Arian churches, amongst the very many Christian buildings excavated in North Africa, is discussed by Marrou (1960) 143–44, and by Modéran (2003) 36–39. Arian churches in Italy have only been identified when documented in written sources: Cecchelli and Bertelli (1986). De Angelis d'Ossat (1970) sought to show that Arian churches in Italy were deliberately built with a different ratio of length to width than Catholic ones, but is unconvincing.

[6] Procopius, *Wars* 3.21.25.

church of Ste. Marie de la Daurade at Toulouse, which was summarily described (but never drawn) before its destruction in 1764, and which may have been erected by the 5th c. Visigothic kings of Aquitaine.[7] In Ravenna, however, we have a rich collection of churches which have much of their sculptural and mosaic decoration intact, and which we can reliably identify as either Catholic or Arian (from surviving inscriptions and from written records).[8] Surely doctrinal differences, and rivalries, will have left clear traces in the iconography of Ravenna's churches?

If there are differences, however, they are certainly subtle, and hard to detect. The two figurative programmes that can most obviously be compared are the mosaics that decorate the domes of the two baptisteries: that of the Catholics, executed in around 458; and that of the Arians, of sometime around 500 [Figs. 1 and 2].[9] These differ in significant ways stylistically: the Catholic Baptistery clothes the surrounding ring of Apostles in gold and white, and sets them against a deep blue background and within a surround of silk drapes and luxuriant acanthus; the Apostles of the Arians are both more stylised and more austere, clothed in white against a gold background and separated from each other by very simple palm trees. However, there is remarkably little divergence iconographically between the two schemes, and nothing that can be set down to doctrinal difference. Indeed, as is well known, the Arian baptistery, which is somewhat later than its Catholic counterpart, copied closely the iconography of the earlier building.[10]

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[7] For Ricimer's mosaic: Huelsen *et al.* (1924) 29–37 and tav.V–VIII. For the mosaics of Ste. Marie de la Daurade: Woodruff (1931). The early history of the Daurade is unknown, but Visigothic, and hence Arian, patronage is possible, given the sumptuousness of its decoration and the presence in Toulouse of the Visigothic court. Neither Ricimer's mosaic, nor the mosaics of the Daurade, seem to have been visibly 'Arian'; but, particularly in the latter case, there is also no way of knowing how much the iconography may have been altered in the centuries between their creation and their destruction.

[8] The excellent preservation of Ravenna's early Christian churches is due to the city escaping both 8th c. Byzantine iconoclasm and the enthusiasm of later builders (since, after the 6th c., it languished as a provincial backwater). They are exceptionally well documented and dated, thanks largely to the remarkably detailed account of them given in the 9th c. by Agnellus' *Codex Pontificalis*.

[9] Deichmann (1974–86) I, 17–47 and 251–55.

[10] There is a slight complication: nine of the 'Arian' Apostles may belong to a second phase of decoration: Deichmann (1969) 321, no. 251 and fig. 272. However, this is not thought to be much later in date than the original phase, and anyway three of the leading Apostles (and the throne), which dictate the basic iconography, certainly belong to the first, indisputably Arian, phase.

Fig. 1 The mosaics (of *ca.* 458) in the centre of the dome of the Catholic Baptistery. The restored patch is clearly visible (with the dove, and the heads of Christ and John) (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 39). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

The only major difference in the overall design of the two domes, is that the Apostles of the Arians are processing towards a sumptuous throne, on which sits a jewelled cross, while those of the Catholics merely meet each other half way. However, the Catholic baptistery also incorporated thrones with crosses, but in a lower register (not illustrated).

If we concentrate on the central scene, the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan, what was represented in both domes were the events, recorded in Mark's Gospel (1:9–11), when:

Fig. 2 The mosaics of the dome of the Arian Baptistery (of the late 5th or early 6th c.) (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 251). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

> …Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased".

This is one of the few moments in the Gospels when all three members of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—feature as actors together in the same scene; and, had they wanted to, it could surely have been used by the patrons of these mosaics to emphasise their different Trinitarian positions. Admittedly, the Catholic mosaic was set up in around 458, at a time when there was little serious Arian threat to the position of the Catholic church in Italy, so it did not need to

address the Trinitarian disputes in its iconography. However, the Arian baptistery was built in direct competition with the pre-existent Catholic building—so its patrons must have considered whether to incorporate doctrinal difference into their representation of Christ's baptism. However, the underlying iconography of the two mosaics is in fact identical: in both, Christ is equally naked; in both, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descends from Heaven as John performs the baptism; and in both, the Father is an invisible voice, supplied only by our knowledge of the gospel text.[11] The only substantial difference between the two scenes is in how the personified Jordan is represented: in the Catholic Baptistery he is in the water, small, and labelled; in the Arian Baptistery, he sits on the bank, is the same size as the Baptist (and rather larger than Christ), and is not identified by name. If we were to take seriously the iconographical differences that there are between these two representations, I think our conclusion would be the absurd one that Arians attributed greater importance to river-gods than did Catholics: the 'Arian mosaicist' deliberately and considerably enlarged the size of the Jordan from his prototype, and felt confident enough in his audience's powers of recognition not to have to label him.[12]

Clearly, to find material evidence of the dispute between Arians and Catholics in Ravenna, we will have to dig deeper. Doing so, some scraps do emerge—though most prove remarkably unstable on close examination. For instance, it is quite common that Ravennate marble sarcophagi are decorated with a 'christogram'—the conjoined Greek letters Chi and Rho, that form the beginning of the name of Christ. Some of these christograms are flanked by an Alpha and an Omega, 'the Beginning and the End' referred to in the Book of Revelation (1:8, 21:6 and 22:13) [Fig. 3], and some can be dated (though generally only stylistically) to the period of Arian Germanic rule (between

[11] One slight note of caution: in the Catholic mosaics, the heads of Christ and the Baptist, and all of the dove of the Holy Spirit, are (ungainly) restorations of around 1854, replacing an area of fallen mosaics that seem to have been lost (without record) at an early date: Deichmann (1974–86) I, 33. The overall original iconography, however, is clear (unless, in a spirit of extreme scepticism, one wanted to question the presence of the dove). The baptism scene in the Arian Baptistery certainly belongs to its original and Arian phase—since after the capture of Ravenna by the Byzantines the building no longer served as a baptistery, but became part of a monastery of S. Maria: Deichmann (1974–86) I, 252.

[12] A more plausible explanation, of course, is that the 'Arian mosaicist' altered his prototype for aesthetic reasons—to fill the central roundel more successfully and to balance his composition.

Fig. 3 Marble sarcophagus in S. Apollinare in Classe (dated stylistically to the second half of the 5th c.), with christograms and crosses accompanied by Alphas and Omegas (from *Bovini* (1968–69) II, fig. 24a).

476 and 540).[13] It has been suggested, not unreasonably, that the popularity of these symbols was the indirect result of Arianism—christograms were favoured, and prominently displayed, by the Catholics, in reaction to alleged Arian denigrations of Christ; and, with flanking Alphas and Omegas, were used to stress that He was no mere creation by the Father, but an equal being who had existed from before all time.[14] Some of this is entirely possible; but it cannot, unfortunately, be proved, since the christogram and the Alpha and Omega were common throughout the Christian world, and there is insufficient evidence (at least at present) to show them appearing with unexpected frequency in places where Arianism threatened the Catholic position. It is also true, as we have already seen in the case of the Arian Baptistery (and as we shall see later in the case of S. Apollinare Nuovo), that the Arians of Ravenna were seemingly as happy as the Catholics to stress the importance of Christ. Nor, within Arianism, was there necessarily a problem in viewing Christ as 'the Beginning and the End': Arians thought of him as a creation of the Father, but apparently as a creation before the making of the world, and hence before human time began.[15] For both the Arians and the Catholics, Christ would be present at the Beginning and the End of *human* time, which is what the Alpha and Omega of Revelation must refer to, since an eternal God (and heavenly time) can have no Omega and no End in both Catholic and Arian theology.

There is certainly a danger of over-reading or over-emphasising Arian or anti-Arian messages in the iconography.[16] In S. Vitale, for instance, a church begun by the Catholics under Ostrogothic rule (and completed several years after the Byzantine capture of the city), one of the mosaics in the chancel shows Abraham at Mamre, offering food to his God, who had appeared to him in the form of three strangers [Fig. 4].[17]

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[13] Examples of christograms on sarcophagi accompanied by an Alpha and Omega, with their approximate dates, are: Bovini (1968–69) II, 16 and 23 (mid-5th c.); 24, 25 and 27 (later 5th c.); 32, 33 and 34 (early 6th c.). Two christograms, each accompanied by an Alpha and Omega, feature in the Catholic Archiepiscopal Chapel (of 494/519), built during the period of Ostrogothic Arian rule over the city: Deichmann (1958) fig. 220.

[14] The possible significance of these christograms is well discussed by Ferrua (1991) 37–62.

[15] For an intelligent discussion of 'Arian' beliefs, see Simonetti (1967).

[16] For an example of over-interpretation, closer to Dan Brown than to good sense: Quacquarelli (1977), arguing that the Greek letters which appear on the robes of the Apostles in the Arian Baptistery are keys to covert Arian messages.

[17] As recounted in Genesis 18. S. Vitale, although begun sometime between 521 and 532, was not dedicated until 547, seven years after the fall of Ravenna to the Byzantine forces. Its mosaics must post-date the Catholic conquest of the city.

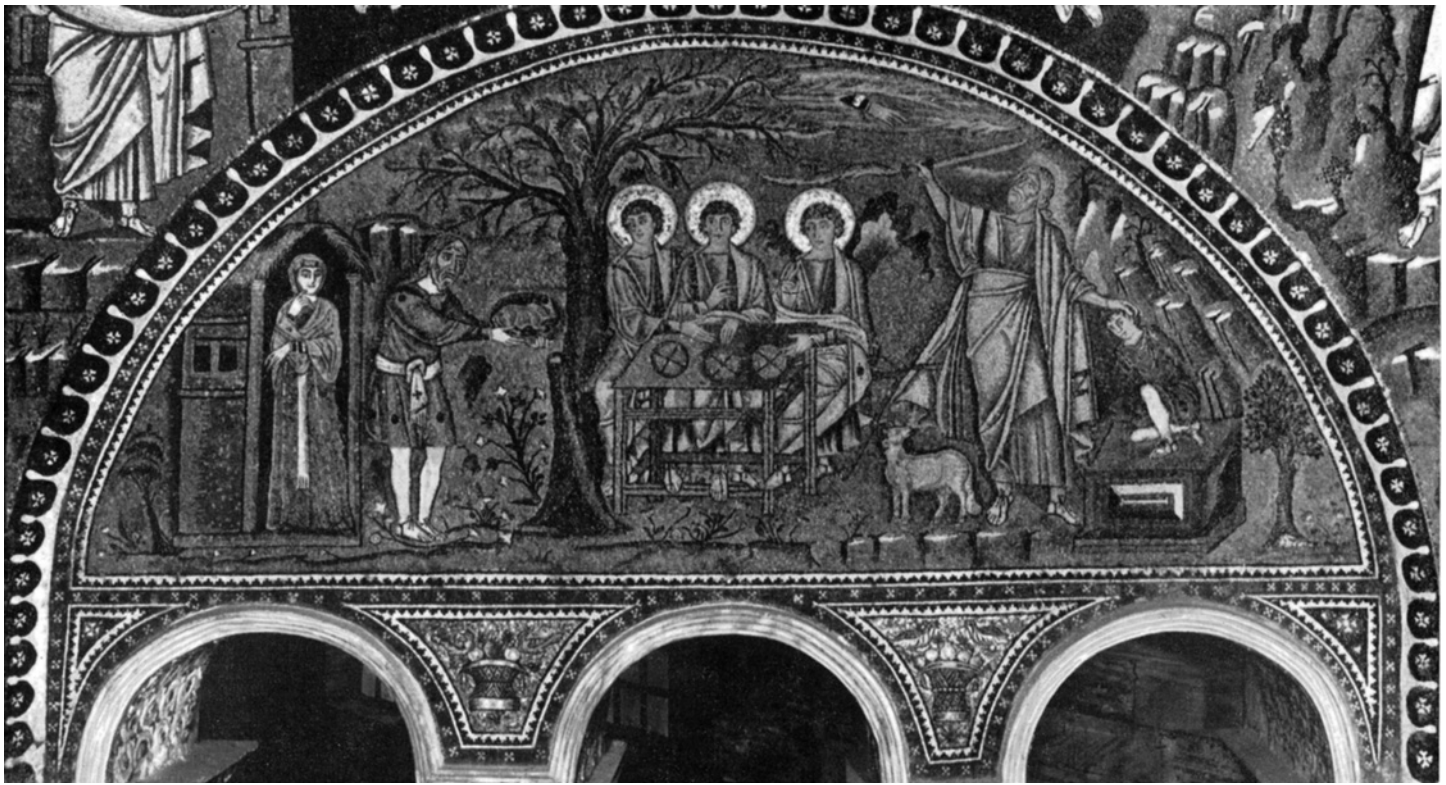

Fig. 4 Mosaics on the north wall of the chancel of S. Vitale (dedicated in 547). On the left, Abraham feeds his God, who has appeared to him at Mamre in the form of three men (his wife, Sarah, stands in the door of their house). On the right (on a much later occasion), Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 315).
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Unsurprisingly, this story was used against Arians by Catholic theologians, including Ambrose and Augustine, as a proof that God was three absolutely equal persons, and not a Trinity of unequal powers—and the Mamre figures in S. Vitale are certainly shown as three clones, indistinguishable from each other.[18] But, in the specific context of S. Vitale, there was a much more pressing reason to represent this particular event. The two side-walls of the chancel are both decorated with Old Testament scenes of thank-offerings to God, included because they pre-figured the Christian eucharist, celebrated on the high altar between them. On the south wall are the offering by Abel of a lamb (Genesis 4:4), and by Melchisedek of bread and wine (Genesis 14:18–20); while on this, the north wall, we have the Mamre scene, next to Abraham's later offering, as a blood-sacrifice, of his only son, Isaac.[19] It is, of course, perfectly possible, indeed likely, that a Trinitarian interpretation of the Mamre scene was also intended here, but this was certainly not the primary reason for representing the scene in S. Vitale.

The mosaics of S. Vitale are the most complete Catholic cycle surviving in Ravenna, and, if we examine them for signs of doctrinal dispute with the Arians, what is most immediately striking is the absence of anything obvious. The religious iconography represented would have been as acceptable in an Arian, as in this Catholic, context: scenes from the life of Moses; figures of Prophets and Evangelists; pre-figurations of the eucharist; representations of Jerusalem and Bethlehem; busts of the Apostles; and the Lamb of God supported by angels. In the centre of the apse is a young Christ, clad in imperial purple (decorated with gold bands), seated on the blue orb of the heavens, and holding a scroll sealed with the seven seals of the Apocalypse; two angels are presenting to him the bishop of Ravenna, Ecclesius (under whom S. Vitale was begun) and San Vitale himself, sumptuously dressed, to whom Christ is presenting a martyr's crown.[20] At first sight, we might think that this majestic image of Christ, that dominates the chancel of S. Vitale, was intended as a deliberate and pointed visual message for the Arians, stressing Christ's power and divinity in a way that only Catholics could. But this argument falls apart when we look at an Arian representation of Christ, set up in Rome in 460/72, which followed the usual practice of the 5th and early 6th c.

[18] Montanari (2002) 195–96, citing Ambrose, *De Abraham* 1.33 and Augustine, *De Trinitate* 2.11.20. Augustine stressed that Abraham saw three figures of equal age and standing, just as they are represented in S. Vitale.

[19] Deichmann (1958) figs. 312–15.

[20] Deichmann (1958) figs. 311–57.

of placing Christ in the centre of the apse (whatever the dedication of the church) and depicted him exactly as in S. Vitale: clad in purple and gold, and seated on a blue orb. Furthermore, as we shall see, he is represented in similar style in the Arian church in Ravenna built by Theoderic, that is now S. Apollinare Nuovo.[21]

There probably is a pointed message in the apse of S. Vitale, but it was one aimed at the rival Catholic church of Milan, not at the Arians of Ravenna. Milan, thanks to Bishop Ambrose at the end of the 4th c., had gained a prestigious clutch of patron-martyrs: above all, Saints Gervasius and Protasius.[22] Ravenna, which struggled to be free of Milanese ecclesiastical control, lacked heavenly patrons of comparable status—that is until a *Passio*, recounting the martyrdom of Saints Gervasius and Protasius, was written, which claimed that their father and guiding influence was none other than Vitalis, a Ravennate martyr. This *Passio* cannot be accurately dated, but is almost certainly of the early 6th c.[23] The epitaph of Bishop Ecclesius, under whom the church of S. Vitale was founded and who was buried in its atrium in around 532, was careful to include full reference to this new myth—Vitalis is described as 'the father who, fleeing the contagion of the world, was an example of faith and martyrdom to his two sons [Gervasius and Protasius]'.[24] The architectural and decorative glories of the church of S. Vitale, where Gervasius and Protasius appear only in a supporting role low down inside the triumphal arch, combined with the legend of the *Passio*, informed the Catholic clergy of Milan of Ravenna's seniority and splendour.[25] When, at a slightly later date, a Catholic bishop of Ravenna set up a mosaic procession of saints in S. Apollinare Nuovo, a white-haired Vitalis was shown, preceding the youthful fig-

[21] For the figure of Christ in Ricimer's mosaic: Huelsen *et al.* (1924) 33–34 and tav. V. Ricimer's Christ differs from that in S. Vitale in only minor ways: he is not presenting a martyr's crown (since it is the Apostles who surround him); he is bearded, not clean-shaven; and he holds, not a sealed scroll, but an open book (the text, unfortunately, if it was legible, was never recorded). The original (Arian) dedication of this church is not known; perhaps, from the evidence of the apse-mosaic, it was to the Holy Apostles (or to one of them). When Gregory the Great purified the church for Catholic use, he dedicated it to St Agatha (S. Agata dei Goti).

[22] McLynn (1994) 211–16.

[23] Lanzoni (1927) 725; Deichmann (1969) 21–22.

[24] Agnellus, *Codex Pontificalis* 61 (ed. Testi Rasponi p.172): '*His genitor natis fugiens contagia mundi / Exemplum fidei martiriique fuit*'.

[25] Deichmann (1958) figs. 338–39 for the busts of Gervasius and Protasius.

ures of Saints Gervasius and Protasius, and faced across the nave by his supposed wife, and fellow martyr, Valeria.[26]

If we look in detail at representations of Christ in the mosaics of Ravenna, and compare those of the Arians with those of the Catholics, there is very little to separate them visually. During his reign, Theoderic, Ostrogothic king of Italy (493–526), dedicated a church to Christ, which survives today, with much of its mosaic decoration intact, as S. Apollinare Nuovo. The church contains an entire Arian cycle of the life of Christ, with nothing in it that could remotely offend a Catholic Christian.[27] Christ appears throughout in the same purple of majesty (embellished with gold) used in S. Vitale, his miraculous powers are repeatedly stressed (with no reference to them being in some way subordinate to those of the Father), and in one scene he appears figuratively as the Eternal Judge, separating the sheep from the goats [Fig. 5], as in the words of Matthew (25:31–3):

> When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Lower down on the walls of the church, larger figures of Christ also appear, just above the nave-arcades: on one side, as an infant seated on the lap of an enthroned Virgin; on the other, as a mature and bearded figure, seated on a throne, flanked by angels, and clad in the customary imperial purple.[28] Sadly, the apse of S. Apollinare collapsed in the 7th or 8th c. and the nature of its decoration is unrecorded, but

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[26] Deichmann (1958) figs. 121, 122 and 130.

[27] Penni Iacco (2004) is a very learned article, arguing that every scene represented was chosen to support the Arian interpretation of Christ. But this is only true if each scene is followed through to some learned exegesis of the relevant gospel texts—as she rightly points out in her final footnote (p. 212, n. 54), there is nothing in the representations themselves that was explicitly Arian. In other words, a learned theologian might be able to read them as Arian; but visually they are neutral.

[28] The right-hand half of the present adult figure of Christ is the result of a restoration of 1857/62—originally he held an open book, with a text variously recorded as either '*Ego sum Rex Gloriae* (I am the King of Glory)', or '*Ego sum Lux Mundi* (I am the Light of the World)', statements that are neutral within the Arian-Catholic debate: Bovini (1966B) 98–104; Deichmann (1969) 305, no. 113 and fig. 259; and Deichmann (1974–86) I, 146–47. Attempts to attribute the large figures of Christ and of the Virgin to a Catholic phase of decoration (e.g. by Sörries (1983) 277–80 and 283–85) ignore overwhelming evidence to the contrary: Bovini (1966A).

Fig. 5 Christ, in one of the Arian mosaics in S. Apollinare Nuovo, separating the sheep from the goats (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 174). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

the evidence of the rest of the church strongly suggests that it must have been dominated by a figure of Christ (the patron of the church) as splendid, or more so, than that which survives in S. Vitale.

Interestingly, it is normally only when there is a text accompanying a representation of Christ that we can begin to detect controversy. The Catholic Archiepiscopal Chapel, built by Bishop Peter of Ravenna (494–519) right in the middle of Arian rule over the city, has over its entrance doorway a striking representation of Christ dressed as a soldier with a cloak of imperial purple, bearing a cross in his right hand and an open book in his left, and trampling under his feet a serpent and a lion ('You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot', Psalm 91:13) [Fig. 6].[29] There is nothing here, in the iconography alone, that necessarily points to polemic with the Arians, even with such an aggressive Christ.[30] But the text of the open book does give food for thought: '*Ego sum via, veritas, et vita*; I am the way, the truth, and the life'. The text itself is not explicitly anti-Arian; but it does come from one of the passages used by Catholics to prove that Father and Son were of absolutely the same nature. Christ, replying to a question by St. Thomas as to how to know the way to salvation, said:

> I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.... Whoever has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:6–9).

To know and see the Son, is to know and see the Father, because they are identical in nature. However, even in this case, anti-Arian polemic is impossible to prove, since the first half of this passage, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me', which includes the phrase shown in the mosaic, could be used by

[29] The lower half of the figure of Christ (from the waist downwards), and the beasts under his feet, are the creation of a 20th c. restoration. But enough of the original survives to show beyond doubt Christ's military costume, and to suggest the presence of beasts; the open book, with its text, is certainly also original: Wilpert (1917) III, pl. 89 (showing the mosaic as it was before restoration); Deichmann (1969) 317, no. 217 and fig. 266.

[30] The possibility that Christ trampling the beasts might represent a triumph over heresy, rather than over evil in general, is explored by Ferrua (1991) 29–30 (but with inconclusive results, since the image was quite common in the Christian world, appearing, for instance, in the mid-5th c. stucco decoration of the Catholic baptistery: Deichmann (1958) fig. 84).

Fig. 6 Christ the warrior, set over the doorway of the Archiepiscopal Chapel, tramples underfoot a lion and a snake (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 217).
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Arians in support of their point of view—that the Son was a means to accede to the superior God, the Father. Indeed, it is known to have been used in exactly this way by a later 4th c. Arian theologian.[31]

So far we have failed to find explicit and unambiguous difference between the iconography of Catholic and Arian churches in Ravenna; but the situation may once have been rather different. We see only those Arian mosaics that were spared when the churches they were in were re-consecrated to Catholic use, after the Byzantine capture of the city in 540. We cannot know what decoration was removed at the time of rededication, though we do know that some things were. This is very clear in the case of Theoderic's church to Christ (now S. Apollinare Nuovo), which was rededicated to St. Martin by Bishop Agnellus sometime around 561.[32] When this happened, most of the mosaics were left untouched, including the Virgin and Child, the Christ enthroned, and the cycle of his life, mentioned above. But towards the west end of the church, some small figures were removed (and replaced by plain tesserae and by curtains) from in front of representations of Ravenna's palace and of the port of Classe.[33] Here, almost certainly what went were figures of Ostrogothic dignitaries, including perhaps Theoderic himself, removed in order to forget the Arian origins of the church—it is very unlikely that there was any particular theological significance in the scenes. However, two much larger, more imposing, and more significant bands of original mosaic were removed at the same time, and were replaced by the rows of Christian martyrs that now process down either side of the nave, to present their crowns to the Virgin and Child and to the enthroned Christ (the men being headed by the figure of St. Martin, the new dedicatee of the church, and the women by the three Magi).[34]

There is no way of knowing what these new mosaics replaced, but presumably it was something distasteful to Catholics—possibly a different selection of saints, including perhaps some Fathers of the

[31] *Letter of Auxentius* 149, 31 [51].

[32] For the date: Deichmann (1974–86) I, 129. The current dedication of the church to S. Apollinare dates from the 9th c., when relics of this saint were brought into the city from Classe, and deposited here.

[33] Deichmann (1958) figs. 100 and 108–109; Deichmann (1969) 304–305, nos. 108–109, and figs. 257 and 260. Urbano (2005) contains an account and discussion in English of the changes made in S. Apollinare.

[34] Deichmann (1958) figs. 98–107.

Gothic church?[35] Certainly, when the Catholics were looking for a new dedicatee for this church, and a saint to head one of their processions of martyrs, they deliberately fixed on a saint, Martin, who had acquired an anti-Arian reputation. Although Martin had played little role in his lifetime as an opponent of heresy, during the 5th c. he had gradually gained a reputation as a bastion of Catholic orthodoxy against the pretensions of Arians. It was certainly for this reason that Martin, a foreign saint from north of the Alps, was granted singular honours by the Catholics of Ravenna in Theoderic's great Arian foundation.[36] It is a great pity that we cannot know whether Martin and the present processions of martyrs really did replace saints with Arian connotations. If they had, this would be deeply illuminating of the way that iconography could be used to define religious difference. Representations of Christ and scenes from the Gospels were not the things which divided Arians and Catholics; but what perhaps did divide them were the saints and authority figures that each sect chose to revere.[37]

The re-dedication of Theoderic's Church of Christ to St. Martin was, as we have seen, a clear statement of Catholic triumph after the defeat of Ostrogothic Arianism, and it is this triumphalism that provides the most striking evidence of religious discord within Ravenna. In S. Vitale (dedicated in 547) a less aggressive, but none the less pointed, visual celebration of triumph was also made, in the only mosaics of that church that we have not so far considered—the famous representations of the emperor Justinian and the empress Theodora, accompanied by courtiers, making gifts to S. Vitale and processing towards the apse. [Fig. 7] In these scenes, only one other figure than the imperial couple is identifiable with any confidence—Maximian, bishop at the time of the dedication of the church, who is prominently labelled, standing next to the emperor and holding a jewelled cross. Since neither Justinian nor Theodora ever visited Italy, these representations were purely symbolic, rather than depictions of a real event. One of the things they were certainly intended to symbolise was an

[35] Admittedly it was very rare in the 6th c. to depict saints who post-dated the Peace of the Church (and almost all pre-Constantinian saints were fully acknowledged by Arians and Catholics alike); but the representation of Martin (who died in 397) in the *ca.* 561 mosaics shows that later saints, who had gained 'sectarian' reputations, could be represented.

[36] For Martin's posthumous reputation as an opponent of Arians: Van Dam (1993) 17–18.

[37] I owe this interesting observation to Rebecca Lyman.

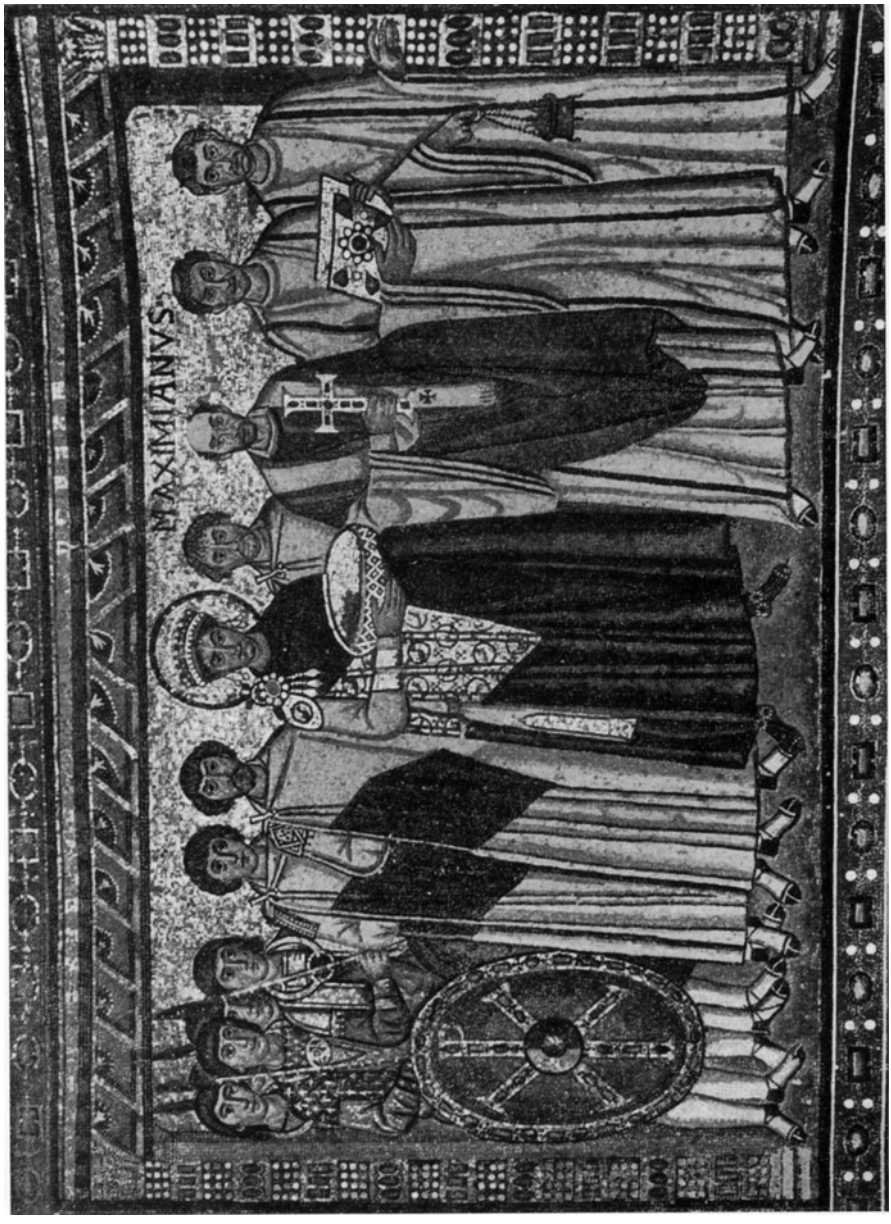

Fig. 7 S. Vitale. Scene in the chancel, with the emperor Justinian presenting a great gold dish to the church (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 359). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

ideal of Catholic emperor and bishop, standing shoulder-to-shoulder, both fostering the interests of the Church. Under Ostrogothic rule, however benign, the Arian king and the Catholic bishop could never be depicted in this way—the S. Vitale mosaics celebrated a triumphant return, after some seventy-five years of Arian Germanic rule, to the correct ordering of Church and empire.[38]

Other mosaics that clearly celebrated the triumph of Catholicism, this time in an explicitly theological way, once decorated the apse of the Ravennate church of S. Michele in Africisco, dedicated in 545 some five years after the capture of Ravenna by the Byzantines.[39] These mosaics, which by then stood in a deconsecrated and ruinous building, were sold in 1843 to Frederick William IV of Prussia, detached from the apse, and eventually transported to Berlin. Sadly, in the process the original mosaics were destroyed and replaced by copies, so that what can be seen today in Berlin's Museum of Late Antique and Byzantine Art is only an inaccurate mid-19th c. copy of the original.[40] However, before the mosaic was detached and destroyed, it was carefully drawn (Fig. 8); so we can be confident of what it represented. Over the apse was a small figure of an enthroned and bearded Christ of the Last Judgement, flanked by archangels, and by angels sounding the Last Trump. In the apse itself was an imposing standing figure of a youthful Christ (in his by now familiar purple and gold robes), flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel, and holding a jewelled cross in one hand and an open book in the other. Once again, Christ features very prominently in a Ravenna mosaic; but once again there is nothing in the representation itself that would have been out of place in a church of either sect. The text displayed in the open book, however, is much more telling. It is made up of two separate phrases from St. John's Gospel (14:9 and 10:30): '*Qui vidit me vidit et Patrem. Ego et Pater unum sumus*; Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. The Father and I are one'. These two short phrases, in reality sepa-

[38] For the Justinian and Maximian mosaic, and the likelihood that it was made in two phases: Andreescu-Treadgold and Treadgold (1997) 708–23.

[39] For S. Michele and its mosaics: Deichmann (1969) 220–25 and figs. 210–17. For the church: Grossmann (1973).

[40] The sorry story is told by Andreescu-Treadgold (1990), who also identified some surviving fragments, now in Torcello, London and St. Petersburg.

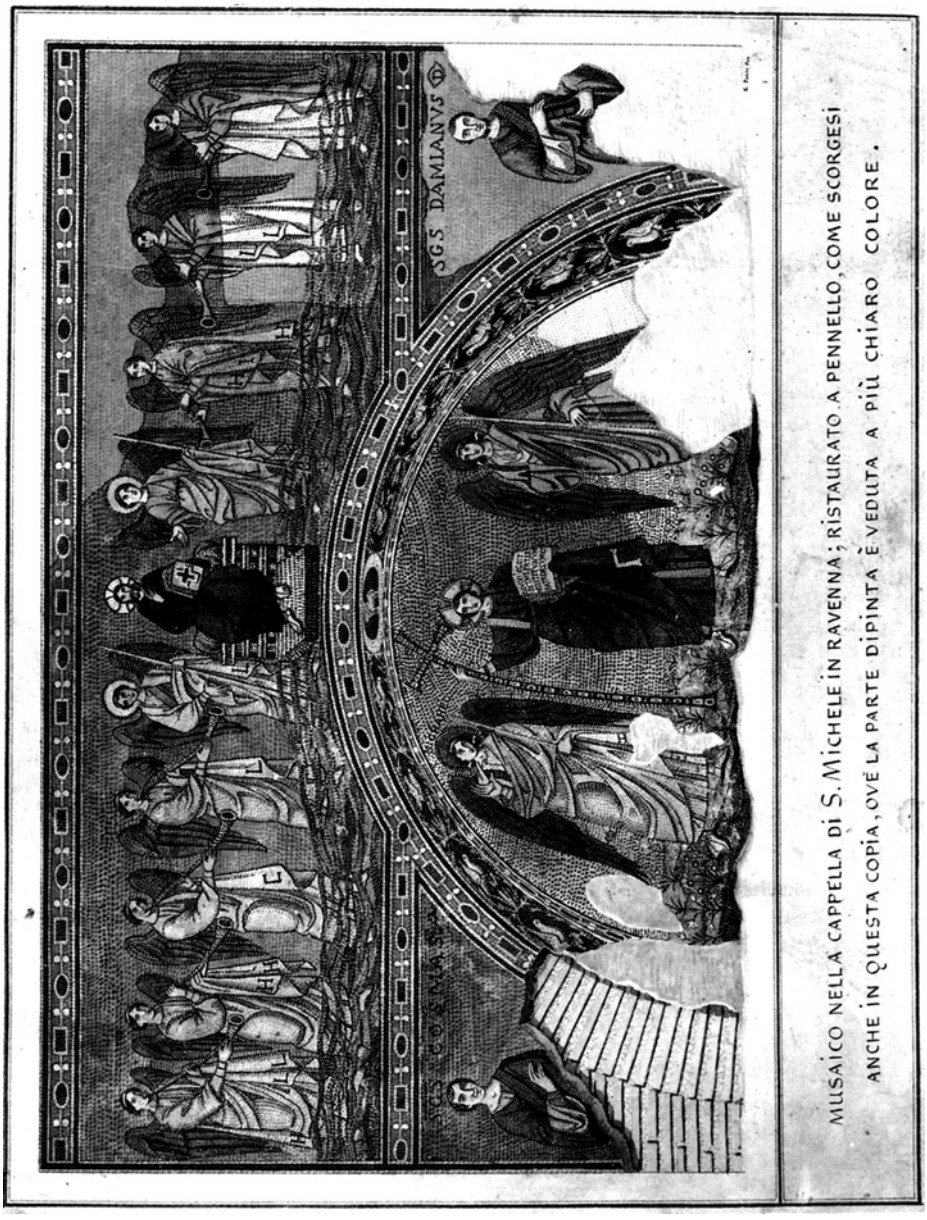
SGS DAMIANVS
MUSAICO NELLA CAPPELLA DI S. MICHELE IN RAVENNA; RISTAURATO A PENNELLO, COME SCORGESI
ANCHE IN QUESTA COPIA, OVE LA PARTE DIPINTA È VEDUTA A PIÙ CHIARO COLORE.

Fig. 8 Watercolour of the mosaics of S. Michele in Africisco, made in 1843 shortly before they were detached and destroyed (from *Das Museum für spätantike und byzantinische Kunst*, 131 fig.66).

rated from each other by four chapters of the gospel, spell out a message that is unambiguously and proudly Catholic and anti-Arian.[41]

The S. Michele mosaics confirm yet again that, without texts to help us, very little of the controversy between Catholics and Arians in Ravenna would show up in the record of the buildings alone and of their mosaics, despite the quite exceptional level of archaeological and artistic preservation in the city.[42] However, the fact that we find it hard to spot controversy in the monuments, does not necessarily mean there was none at the time. It is, for instance, very striking quite how many representations of God the Son, similar though they are, were set up in the churches of Ravenna during, and just after, the period of Arian rule. Theoderic's church, later S. Apollinare Nuovo, is particularly interesting in this regard. Can it be coincidence that, at a time of controversy over the person of the Son, the king chose to dedicate his church to Christ, and within it set up a mosaic cycle of his life, which is unparalleled in any other early Christian building?[43] If we combine the evidence from this church with that of the Arian Baptistery (Fig. 2), it looks as if there was something of a battle going on for the possession of Christ and Christ's image in Ravenna, between the rival 'orthodox' churches of the city—a battle that was fought with entirely conventional, sometimes identical, iconography.

When we view the mosaics of the dome of the Arian Baptistery, we see their similarity to those of its Catholic counterpart, and, from the calm perspective of a thousand-five-hundred years later, perhaps reflect that there was not that great a difference between the theological positions of the two sects. But devout early-6th c. Catholics, viewing the same mosaics, might have been profoundly distressed and angered by

[41] Unsurprisingly, these had been favourite texts of Athanasius in his 4th c. battles against Arianism: Hanson (1988) 426.

[42] Robert Coates-Stephens has alerted me to another possible instance of a markedly anti-Arian text that may well have accompanied a mosaic—this time in Rome. A lost inscription, recorded in the apse of S. Crisogono in the 9th c., read '*Sedes celsa D(e)i praefert insignia Xpi quod patris (et) filii creditur unus honor*', which can be translated as 'The lofty throne of God displays the insignia of Christ, because we believe [for *creditur*] that the dignity [*honor*] of the Father and the Son is one'. The apse may have carried a mosaic depiction of a throne (the 'sedes celsa Dei'), with a cross set upon it (the '*insignia Christi*'): De Rossi (1861–88) vol. II, part 1, p. 152, no. 13.27.

[43] For the dedication inscription—seen and recorded in the 9th c.: Agnellus, *Codex Pontificalis* 86: '*Theodericus rex hanc ecclesiam a fundamentis in nomine Domini Nostri Yhesu Christi fecit* (King Theoderic built this church from its foundations, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord)'.

what they saw, precisely because it was so familiar—their Lord and Saviour, depicted exactly as he was in the Catholic Baptistery, but here within a temple of the heretics. Visual symbols do not depend for their power and their message just on the internal details of their iconography and style. They derive much of their significance from the context in which they are displayed: Christ in an Arian baptistery is an Arian Christ, even if he *looks* identical to a Catholic one. And how we perceive and interpret individual images will depend very largely on our pre-existent knowledge and attitudes, or on how the images are explained to us by others. Catholic and Arian priests, baptising within their respective baptisteries, probably viewed the mosaics above them in a very different light, despite their close visual similarity. Conflict between Arians and Catholics over the images of Ravenna is almost impossible for us to detect; but may have been all too obvious to contemporaries.[44]

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[44] I would like to thank, for their very useful ideas (and for saving me from archaeological and theological error), above all David Gwynn, Rebecca Lyman and Marlia Mango, but also Sam Barnish, Béatrice Caseau, Carlos Machado, Yuri Marano, Dragos Mirsanu, and Claudia Rapp. I am also very grateful to the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut of Rome for permission to reproduce, from Deichmann's publication, my Figures 1,2,4,5,6 and 7.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. The mosaics (of *ca.* 458) in the centre of the dome of the Catholic Baptistery. The restored patch is clearly visible (with the dove, and the heads of Christ and John) (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 39). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Fig. 2. The mosaics of the dome of the Arian Baptistery (of the late 5th or early 6th c.) (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 251). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Fig. 3. Marble sarcophagus in S. Apollinare in Classe (dated stylistically to the second half of the 5th c.), with christograms and crosses accompanied by Alphas and Omegas (from *Bovini* (1968–69) II, fig. 24a).

Fig. 4. Mosaics on the north wall of the chancel of S. Vitale (dedicated in 547). On the left, Abraham feeds his God, who has appeared to him at Mamre in the form of three men (his wife, Sarah, stands in the door of their house). On the right (on a much later occasion), Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son Isaac (from Deichmann (1958) fig.315). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Fig. 5. Christ, in one of the Arian mosaics in S. Apollinare Nuovo, separating the sheep from the goats (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 174). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Fig. 6. Christ the warrior, set over the doorway of the Archiepiscopal Chapel, tramples underfoot a lion and a snake (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 217). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Fig. 7. S. Vitale. Scene in the chancel, with the emperor Justinian presenting a great gold dish to the church (from Deichmann (1958) fig. 359). Copyright Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.

Fig. 8. Watercolour of the mosaics of S. Michele in Africisco, made in 1843 shortly before they were detached and destroyed (from *Das Museum für spätantike und byzantinische Kunst*, 131 fig. 66).

POPULAR PIETY

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF PILGRIMAGE: ABU MINA AND BEYOND

Susanne Bangert

Abstract

Christian pilgrimage offers a unique insight into popular piety in Late Antiquity. However, our sources for pilgrimage, both literary and archaeological, vary widely in quality and volume, and modern scholarship has often depended heavily on the evidence from particular well-known sites, most notably the sanctuary of St Menas at Abu Mina in Egypt. This site has revealed a remarkable density of archaeological remains, not only buildings but also the production and circulation of a wide variety of pilgrim souvenirs. Yet it is essential that we move beyond the sanctuary of St Menas and compare the evidence from Abu Mina with that from other major pilgrimage sites in the eastern Mediterranean. As we shall see in this paper, there is no simple pattern in organisation or souvenir production that can be identified in the archaeology of late antique pilgrimage.

Introduction

The rise and development of early Christian pilgrimage has been much studied in recent years and represents an important demonstration of popular piety in Late Antiquity.[1] Christian pilgrimage is well attested from the 4th c. onwards.[2] Major pilgrim sites have been located and to varying degrees excavated, including the shrines of St Thecla and St John in Asia Minor and Sts Sergius and Bacchus and St Symeon in Syria. These sites are all conspicuous for their impressive architecture, but we also have small-scale evidence for the popular piety of pilgrimage, in the form of pilgrim tokens or souvenirs. Most of these artefacts were produced at pilgrim sites for the visitors, and perhaps the richest such pilgrim site that we have is the sanctuary of

[1] Coleman and Elsner (1995).
[2] Maraval (2002); Wilkinson (2002).

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), pp. 293–327

St Menas at Abu Mina, 45 km south-west of Alexandria.[3] At Abu Mina there are extensive physical remains and furthermore a corpus of written sources has been preserved, but it is the survival of numerous small finds from the site that makes Abu Mina such a valuable starting point for a discussion of pilgrimage archaeology. However, it is important not to generalise about such a complex phenomenon from a single site, and so we must also look beyond the cult of St Menas and set the rich and diverse finds from Abu Mina within the broader evidence for pilgrimage in Late Antiquity.

Pilgrimage is a widespread, diverse and popular activity which is not limited to the late antique period. In this article I have chosen to discuss pilgrimage to the shrines of particular saints, as opposed to the more general question of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a complex environment in which the history of locations where Christ was present exists alongside the history of later Christian events and holy figures.[4] Of course, our literary sources do not necessarily make such a distinction. Eastern texts that refer to pilgrimage have been compiled and assessed by Pierre Maraval,[5] while the accounts of well-to-do pilgrims able to travel across Europe, collected by John Wilkinson,[6] give a vivid insight into pilgrimage primarily to sites in the Holy Land. These texts are crucial for their description of cult practices and the general impression they provide about the feasibility of travel. The miracle collections of various saints also provide evidence for the organisation of and cult practices at individual sites and in some instances even offer very good topographical descriptions, as is the case with St Thecla and with a number of the Stylite Saints.[7] To a certain extent, the Acts of the original saints also provide information regarding their later cults, although these texts purport to discuss a time before the cults were fully developed, and information can also be found in patristic and historical literature.

These literary sources reveal a number of important features of late antique pilgrimage which must be remembered when we turn to the

[3] Excavated by the German Institute in Cairo, under Peter Grossmann. For an overview and bibliography in English, see Bangert (Forthcoming).

[4] Wilken (1992).

[5] Maraval (2004).

[6] Wilkinson (1999) and (2002).

[7] *Mir. Thecla*, ed. by Dagron (1978). The literary evidence for the cult of Thecla is discussed in depth by Johnson (2006). For the stylites see the contribution of Schachner in this volume.

archaeological evidence. It appears that pilgrimage did not necessarily involve long-distance travel. There would be pilgrims coming from afar, but large-scale pilgrimage was not seen at many pilgrim sites. A typical pilgrimage would take only a couple of days in Coptic Egypt, while miracle collections such as those of Sts Symeon, Thecla and Menas reveal that a considerable proportion of pilgrims came from the immediate vicinity of the shrine.[8] This is reinforced by references such as those in the miracles of St Thecla to competing local sites, producing, of course, much less efficient help for the needy pilgrim.[9] Thus pilgrimage sites were to a large extent catering for a local population, although the distances travelled by pilgrims could vary widely.[10]

Another feature of pilgrimage is the special feast-days related to the saints, and the consequently very large crowds gathering on these special days. There is a description of a feast day at the St Thecla sanctuary at Meriemlik in southern Asia Minor from 444/48 A.D.:[11]

> One was impressed by the magnificence of the celebrations, another by the great throng of pilgrims, another by the number of bishops present, another by the eloquence of the preachers, another by the fine singing in the church, another by the endurance of the people during the night-office, another by the way services were generally carried out, another by the devotion of those who took part. Others recalled the pushing of the crowds, the stifling heat, the way people kept going in and out during the services with shouting, arguing, and the general confusion that ensued.

Traders would be present in comparable numbers to the pilgrims, supplying them with food and other needs, for pilgrimage was, as expressed by Speros Vryonis, a "religio-commercial event".[12] In the 5th c. the leading figure of Coptic Christianity, Abbot Shenute, preached against the market atmosphere surrounding pilgrimage, complaining about women using make-up and perfume and people being present who came only to eat, drink and commit adultery, so that while the pious

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[8] For the local significance of pilgrimage see Brown (1982) and Cameron (1999) 24–44.

[9] *Mir. Thecla* 2–4 (Dagron (1978) 292–95); Johnson (2006) 123–30.

[10] Viaud (1979) 75. See also Maraval (2004) 11.

[11] *Mir. Thecla* 33.14–25 (Dagron (1978) 375–77). Map Fig. 1. The church lists of feast-days, *synaxaria*, testify to the holy days of individual saints, but the sites could also have other days of special importance. On the feast-days very large crowds indeed gathered and along with these crowds came many commercial interests.

[12] Vryonis Jr (1981). In miracle 42, soap is sold outside the church, 'naos', Mir. Thecla 42.21 (Dagron (1978) 401).

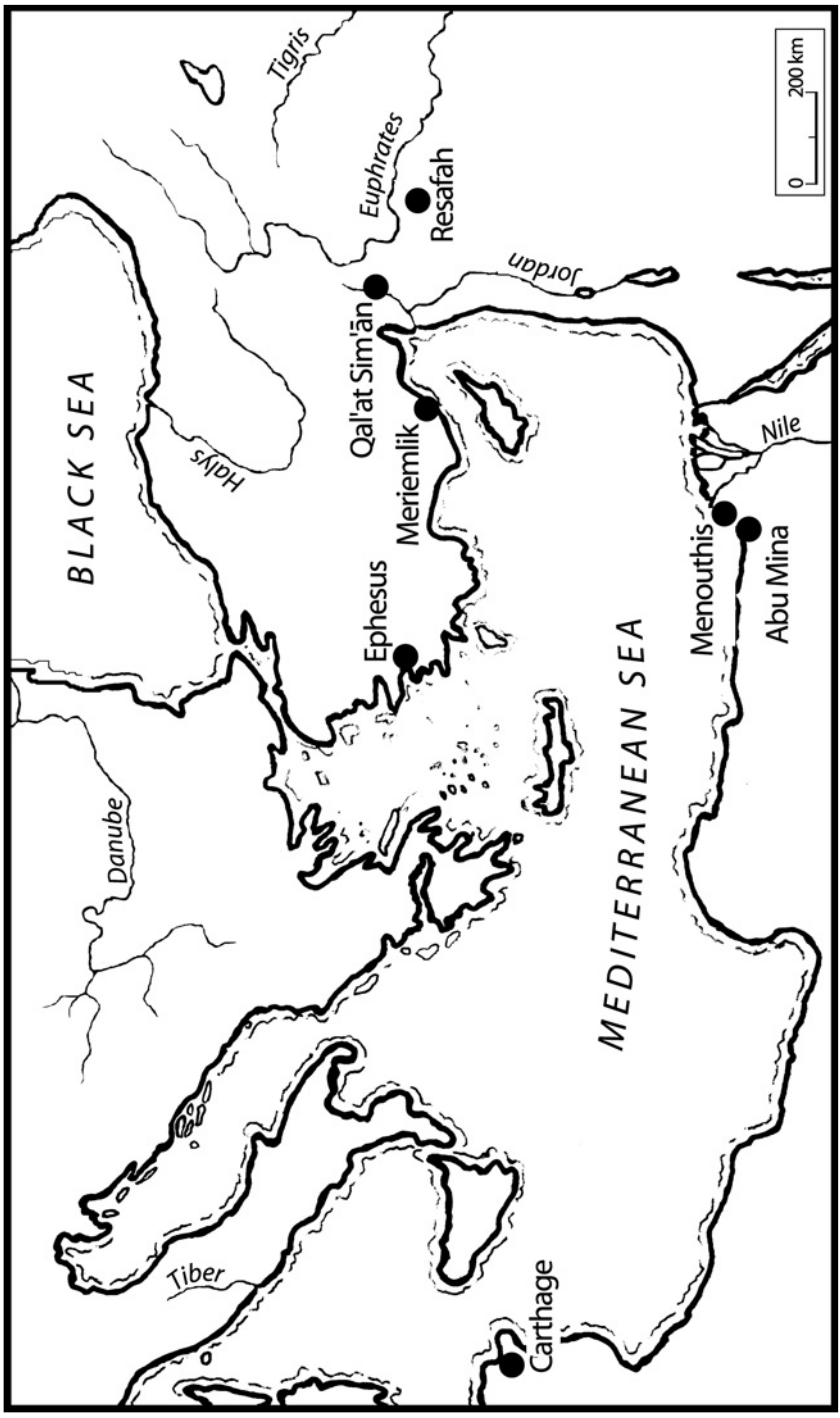

Fig. 1 Location of pilgrim sites (drawing: Keith Bennett).

were singing hymns in the church, the impious were partying outside.[13] In the case of the monastery of St. Symeon Stylite it is likewise said by Michael the Syrian that the Arab raid in 636 on the feast day of the saint 'was a just punishment for the orgies and drunkenness which accompanied these festivals'.[14]

The social context of these pilgrim gatherings comprised many poor and humble people but also some very rich people, and certainly generated considerable revenues. Special artefacts, which were part of the cult practices at the given site, were produced and sold in large numbers, and the shrine could also expect conspicuous donations. Not only money but also food, objects for the church and even animals were left by grateful pilgrims as recorded in the sources for both St Thecla and St Menas.[15] However, the revenues from pilgrimage are poorly recorded in our literary sources. The few glimpses we have seem enough to ascertain that control of the income from a major pilgrim site was important for any organisation or ruler.[16] A certain very mercantile interest on the part of each site to maintain its customers and belittle competing enterprises is also demonstrated in the miracles of Thecla and Artemios,[17] and it is clear that the shrines generated commerce in their surrounding area.[18] But for the prosperity and scale of the great pilgrimage centres our best evidence must derive from archaeology.

Archaeologically, the larger pilgrim sites share certain common features. Most important is the church or church complex, which usually expanded over a period of time. This church complex often has facilities for the cult such as large forecourts and ambulatories or special entrances to crypts allowing for passage. This enables the visitors to approach the specific point of veneration (typically the grave of the saint) by one entrance, and leave by another. The circulation pattern

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[13] Baumeister (1972) 67. The picture revealed from Shenute does not differ greatly from that presented by the Canterbury Tales.

[14] Whitby (2000) xliii.

[15] Kötting (1950) 400; Dagron (1978) 70; Jaritz (1993) 304.

[16] In 795 Theophanes mentions that the emperor gives the revenues of the *panegyris* of Ephesus, 'of 100 pounds of gold' to the church of St John: *Chron. Theoph.* AM 6287 (Mango and Scott (1997) 645–46, with a comment on the amount given). For Abu Mina see also *Hist. Patr. Egypt.* (Abd al Masid and Burmester (1943) 3).

[17] See *Mir. Art.*, ed. by Crisafulli, Nesbitt, and Haldon (1997); also Dagron (1978), for *Mir. Thecla*.

[18] These issues are outlined by Stopford (1994). The social impact of a shrine could be considerable on the surrounding area.

makes the visit of considerably larger numbers of people possible. If the site is remote, large hostel facilities or xenodochia can also be seen, as at Abu Mina and Qalʿat Simʿān. In the case of Abu Mina there are also large baths.

Valuable archaeological evidence also includes small finds from a site which testify to cult practices. Artefacts related to pilgrimage are naturally easy to recognise as such if they have an inscription or a depiction of the saint. From the classical tradition,[19] continued in Christian times, we know that such artefacts could be produced either to carry away from the site, 'pilgrim souvenirs', or to be objects meant to be left behind as 'ex-votos', tokens of thanksgiving.[20] Both ex-votos and moulds for their fabrication have been found.[21] However, when assessing pilgrim souvenirs and ex-votos, it is of course important to bear in mind the conditions always applicable to archaeological finds. We inevitably see a distorted picture because of the preservation or loss of certain materials, as metal or wood are far less likely to have been preserved than ceramics. The cheap mass-produced artefacts of popular piety are all too likely to have been perishable and so only rarely survive in the archaeological record.[22]

For the purposes of this paper, what is perhaps most striking is the sheer diversity of the surviving evidence, both literary and archaeological, which differs widely between each individual pilgrimage site (see Appendix). Furthermore, as a phenomenon, pilgrimage took many forms, and could be understood in many different ways by those who visited pilgrim centres and who took away their souvenirs. It is

[19] Leclercq (1933).

[20] Kötting (1950) 398–435. For a monograph on votives see Witt (2006) and such tokens are discussed in the context of Abu Mina by Engemann (1995).

[21] Wamser (2004) 199–211 and Mango (1986) 244–45; the practice is still in use today: Coleman and Elsner (1995), section IV.

[22] The potential problems posed by the preservation of evidence are highlighted by a special practice seen in Syria. Syrian churches very often feature little side chapels by the side of the altar apse, and in these chapels sarcophagi with pouring holes are common (Donceel-Voûte (1995) 193–98). These sarcophagi would contain relics, and by pouring oil into the top and gathering it again at the bottom the oil was sanctified by touching the holy remains. There are many such sarcophagi preserved from Syria, but no obvious containers for transporting the holy liquid. One probable type of container would be small glass ampullae, but these would be very fragile and as mass-produced vessels are hard to separate from the many lamp fragments found and described in the archaeological reports. Bangert (1998) and, e.g., Ulbert (1986) 140. See also n. 73 below.

therefore difficult to draw general conclusions or to identify a clear pattern to encompass the organisation of a late antique pilgrimage site. There are certain sites regarding which we are particularly well informed, most notably Abu Mina to which I will turn shortly. However, no single site can offer a universal model against which other pilgrimage centres can be judged, as I will show in the second half of this paper, in which I move beyond Abu Mina to look at some of those other centres and the light that they can shed on pilgrimage in Late Antiquity.

The Cult of St Menas at Abu Mina

The pilgrimage site of Abu Mina (Fig. 2) is exceptional, as has already been emphasised, for the cult of St Menas is known both through literary evidence and extensive archaeology.[23] However, the problems raised by this evidence have not always been fully understood. The written sources for the site were generally written a considerable time after the late antique period, which saw the zenith of the pilgrimage shrine from the end of the 5th to the mid 7th c. In consequence, the primary evidence for Abu Mina as a late antique pilgrimage centre is archaeological. The site, south of the Mareotis Lake and less than 50 km from Alexandria, comprises of a town, *ca.* 1 km across, within which an enclosed area contains the large *martyrium* church complex surrounded by courtyards, hostel facilities and administrative housing. The site also features two baths, another church, and several chapels. There is evidence of pre-Christian settlement and the martyr grave is placed in a Roman *hypogaeum.* The site has been deserted since the Early Medieval period, but over the last 50 years a modern monastic pilgrim complex has developed nearby.

Abu Mina is best known for the Menas ampullae (Fig. 8). These are flasks made of unglazed clay, each side formed in a mould, and with a narrow turned neck and two handles. They were produced in a range of sizes of diameters from 25 cm down to 6 cm and with varying degrees of elaborate decoration. The most common decoration is the saint standing *orans* between two kneeling camels and often with an

[23] The following account of Abu Mina will necessarily be brief. For a much fuller discussion see Bangert (Forthcoming).

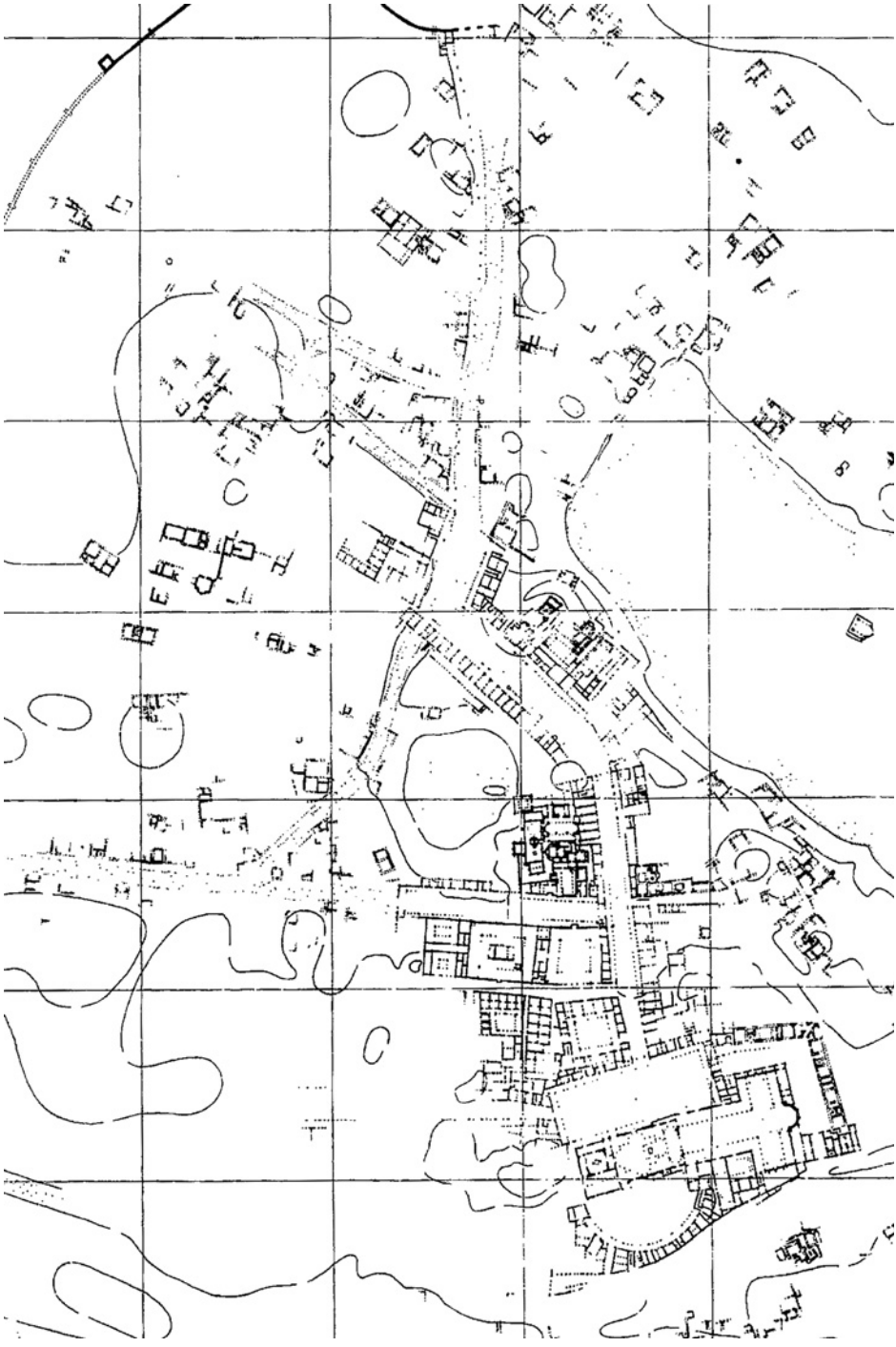

Fig. 2 Plan (selection) of Abu Mina (*ca.* 1:4000) (after Grossmann (2002) fig. 115).

Fig. 3 Plan of Meriemlik (*ca.* 1:4000) (after Hellenkemper (1995) 263 fig. 1).

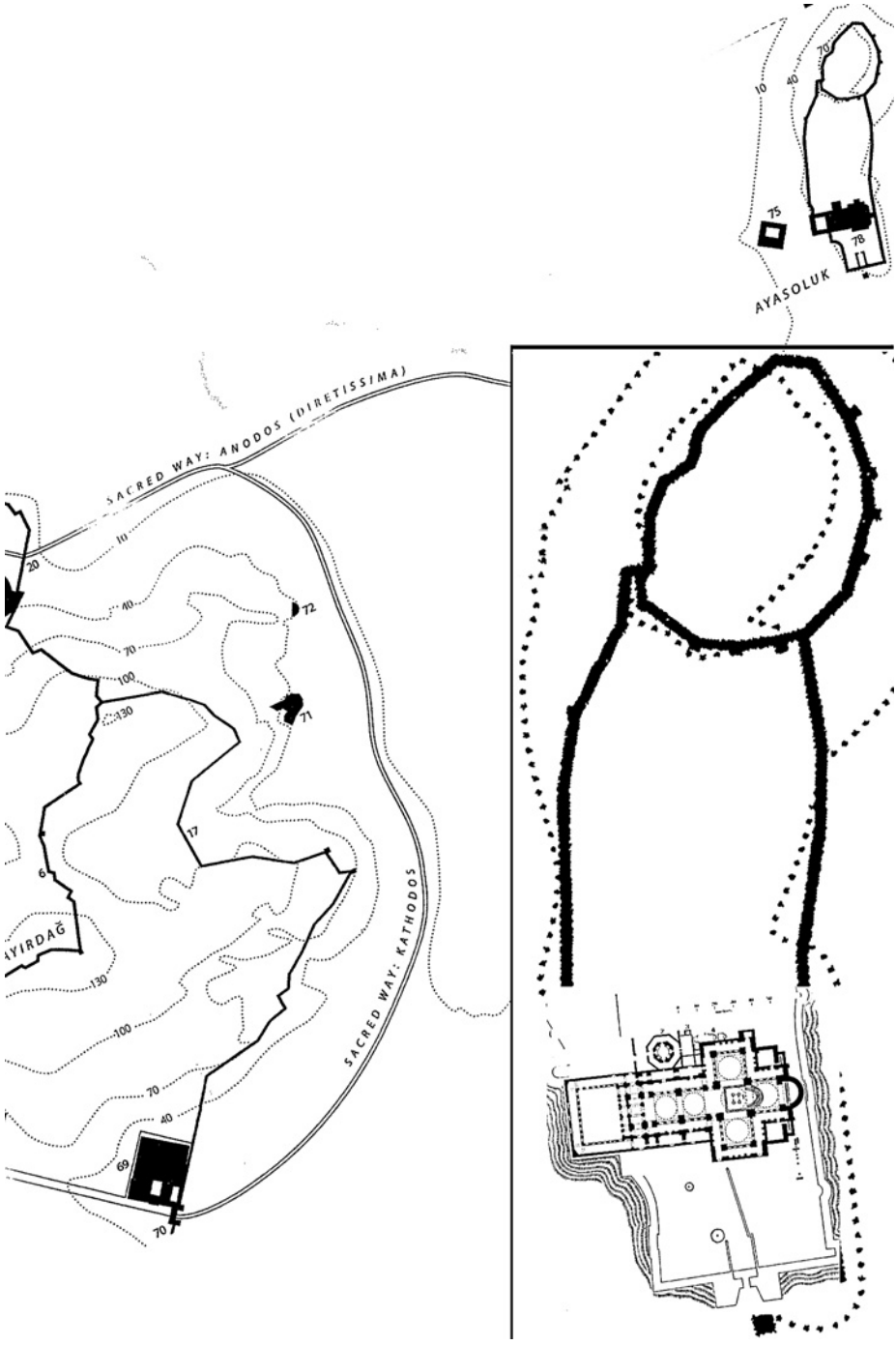

Fig. 4 Plan of Ephesus showing the Ayasoluk (ca. 1:4000) with the church of St John inserted right (modified from Koester (1995b) and Foss (1979) 93 fig. 34).

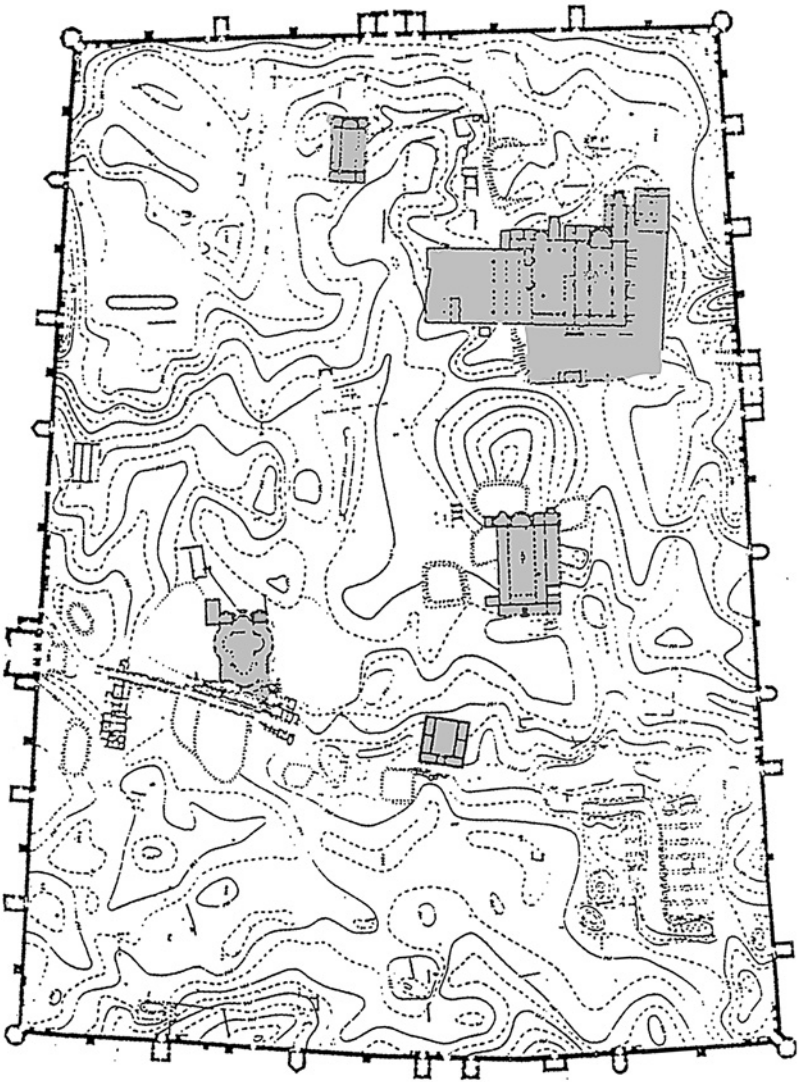

Fig. 5 Plan of Resafah (*ca.* 1:4000) (after Ulbert (1986) 2 fig. 1).

Fig. 6 Plan of Qalʿat Simʿān and Dayr Simʿān (*ca.* 1:4000), with the entire village inserted top left (after Tchalenko (1953) pl. CXXXII).

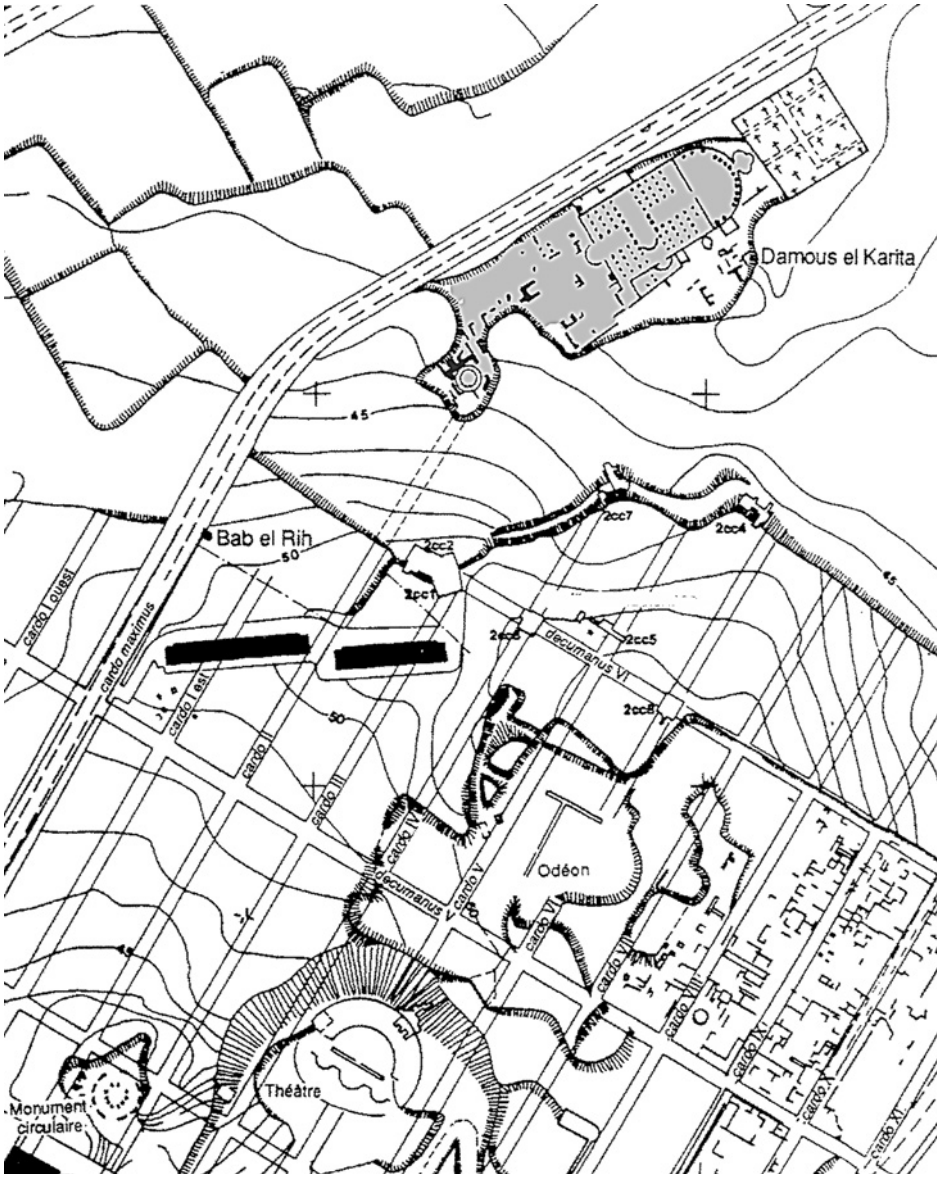

Fig. 7 Plan of Carthage (*ca.* 1:4000) (after Dolenz (2001) 156 fig. 2).

Fig. 8 St Menas ampulla (AN 1872.493, *ca.* 1:1, clay) (photo: Ashmolean Museum).

inscription naming 'holy Menas'. This depiction is the standard iconography of St Menas and in the typology of the ampullae is labelled the 'Main Type', but many other motifs were depicted on the ampullae as well.[24] The ampullae were produced in the 6th and the first half of the 7th c., a shorter period than has often been assumed.[25]

There are good reasons that the Menas ampullae are so well known. They were transported widely, and on the evidence of their find-spots and the number of preserved examples they are seemingly the single most widespread type of pilgrim artefact from Late Antiquity.[26] Many of the examples now in European collections were bought at bazaars

[24] The best overview remains the original monograph on the ampullae by the first excavator of the site: Kaufmann (1910); see also Engemann (1995).

[25] For the chronology of the ampullae and other Menas artefacts, often wrongly described as 5th–7th c., see Bangert (Forthcoming).

[26] As seen for example in the collections of the British Museum or the Louvre, as

in the Near East, but even so, finds have been reported in most central European countries and as far away as Britain.[27]

Less well known is the fact that the Menas ampullae were only one of several types of pilgrim artefact produced at Abu Mina, which include head-flasks, female and horse-rider statuettes and jugs or juglets. These other types of artefacts did not apparently travel as widely as the ampullae and they are found in the local area of the Mareotis and Alexandria.[28] Like the ampullae they are produced of the local clay, and according to the archaeological record they are contemporary with the production of the Menas ampullae in the 6th and early 7th c.

The small head-flasks (height around 8–10 cm, Fig. 9) feature a human figure whose identity remains debated. It has been suggested that it is the saint himself, or it could be a female who is represented.[29] These flasks have rich traces of paint, in pastel colours, like the Hellenistic Tanagra statuettes.[30]

An important group is the female statuettes and horse-riders (height 10–15 cm, Figs. 10 and 11), again with paint preserved. These figurines are a typical example of a well-established prehistoric tradition of the Levant, where such figurines are seen over millennia and in particular the combination of female figures and horse-riders.[31] Roger Moorey[32] researched the female figurines extensively and demonstrated that they are found in slightly varying contexts in Israel, Babylonia, Syria and Egypt back to 2000 B.C. There is a consistency in that female figures and horse-riding figures are found together, and the

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well as in numerous articles on local finds and collections. For a bibliography see Bangert (Forthcoming) and Witt (2000).

[27] Bangert (2007).

[28] In Alexandria, these artefacts seem to appear randomly in all excavations. The finds from Kom-el-Dikka in Alexandria have been published by Polish scholars and a general summary of the evidence from Egypt is provided by Ballet (1991) in the Coptic Encyclopaedia with a good bibliography.

[29] Both ampullae and headflasks are called ampullae by Kiss (1991). I prefer to distinguish between them, with ampullae denoting the lentoid flasks, following the unambiguous terminology used in the field of pilgrim tokens in general. Examples can be seen in Kaufmann (1906), (1907), and (1908), as well as in Wamser (2004).

[30] Named after Tanagra in Greece, one of their major production sites (e.g. Hassan (2002) 142–43). The statuettes were also produced at certain places outside Greece, including Alexandria.

[31] Labib (1953) observed that in the 1950s similar figurines could still be bought in Egypt for feast-days.

[32] Moorey (2003).

Fig. 9 St Menas head flask (AN 1872.1078, *ca.* 1:1, clay) (photo: Ashmolean Museum).

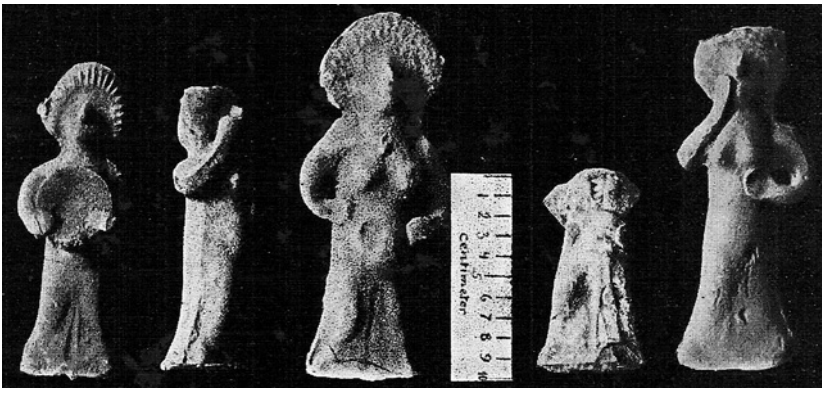

Fig. 10 Female statuettes from Abu Mina (after Kaufmann (1906) 91 fig. 42).

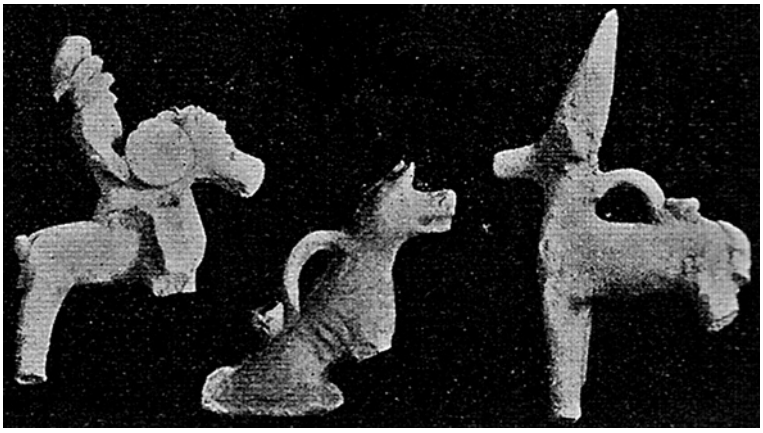

Fig. 11 Horse-rider and other figures from Abu Mina (*ca.* 1:3) (modified from Kaufmann (1906) 93 fig. 44).

figures are seemingly found either in a domestic context, as in Alexandria, or as votive gifts, although not necessarily in sanctuaries. The female figures are believed to be related to fertility, and in Egypt they also correlate with the tradition of Isis figurines, as is seen from some of the figurines from Abu Mina (Fig. 12).

The last group of artefacts from Abu Mina is a very 'normal' type of artefact: jugs of sizes varying from small juglets to quite large jugs (Fig. 13). Like the figurines and the flasks these are made from local unglazed clay—which it should be noted is permeable and so not well suited to storing liquids—and they often have an inscription on the shoulder of the vessel saying τοῦ ἁγιοῦ Μῆνα, as also seen on the ampullae. The purpose of the jugs is unclear. It is natural to consider a possible connection to the very large double bath at Abu Mina, one of two baths at the site. But any such connection must have been symbolic as the jugs' capacity as containers is very poor, and in contrast to the cult of Thecla discussed below there is no reference in the sources for the cult of Menas to a specific cult use for the baths at Abu Mina.[33]

[33] There is another double bath on a similar scale in Egypt, the Kom el Dikka bath in Alexandria, but apart from these, such baths are to my knowledge not found in Egypt. See also Nielsen (1990).

Fig. 12 Female statuette (AN 1872.402, *ca.* 1:1, clay) (photo: Ashmolean Museum).

J. Ward-Perkins, when visiting Abu Mina in the 1940s, commented that this complex variety of artefacts has a distinctly pagan flavour,[34] and, indeed, these are objects with very long traditions in the Levant,

[34] Ward-Perkins (1949).

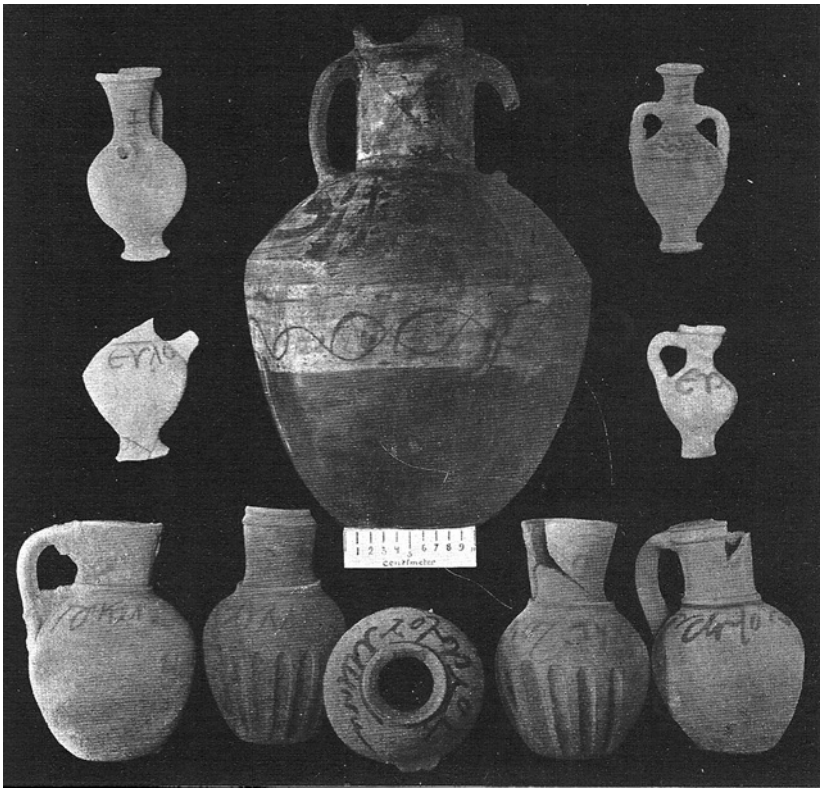

Fig. 13 Jugs and juglets from Abu Mina (Kaufmann (1906) 57 fig. 25).

in Graeco-Roman culture and in Egyptian culture.[35] The important point in connection with pilgrimage archaeology is that this production is seen at Abu Mina on a large scale in a Christian context alongside the Menas pilgrim ampullae. It is the belief of this author that this reflects a persistent small-scale tradition revived in a new economic context and reveals once again how easily existing customs can be incorporated into new religious environments for economic as much as ideological reasons.

[35] Seif El-Din (1985) has argued for a parallel of the Menas flasks to the New Year flasks and the ancient Bes-flasks of Egypt.

Other Major Pilgrim Centres of the Eastern Mediterranean

Abu Mina is a remarkable site, but we cannot allow the sheer volume of material to privilege the cult of St Menas as in some sense the 'template' or model against which all other pilgrim sites and cults must be understood. If we are to do justice to the complex phenomenon of late antique pilgrimage then we must look beyond Abu Mina and examine no less carefully the evidence of other contemporary pilgrimage centres, all of which offer valuable insight into the diversity and significance of Christian pilgrimage in Late Antiquity. In this short paper, it is only possible to consider a few of those centres—all major eastern pilgrimage shrines—which like Abu Mina received imperial support. These are the shrine of St Thecla at Meriemlik, the shrine of St John at Ephesus, and the Syrian shrines of Sts Sergius and Bacchus at Resafah and of St Symeon Stylites at Qalʿat Simʿān (Fig. 1). As will be seen each site offers a different combination of literary, archaeological and artefactual evidence, which is summarised in tabular form in the Appendix.

There are two main sources of evidence for our knowledge of the cult of Saint Thecla (Fig. 3). One is the written texts, including the anonymous Life and Miracles of St Thecla[36] and the pilgrimage narrative of Egeria, who visited the *martyrium* of St Thecla in May 384.[37] The other is the site of her main cult centre in Cilicia, 2 km. south of Seleucia (modern Silifke), on the south coast of Asia Minor.[38] Today the place is called 'Ayatekla',[39] but it is still best known as 'Meriemlik', which denotes a sanctuary of the Virgin Mary but is also a usual way of naming a church ruin in Turkish. Unfortunately, Meriemlik remains only partly excavated, although already in 1903 Strzygowsky stressed the need to excavate: "Meriamlik muss ausgegraben werden".[40] The site was excavated for the first time but only superficially in 1907 by

[36] Dagron (1978) remains the standard discussion of the Life and Miracles of Thecla. Davis (2001) discusses the cult of Thecla in the context of female piety, especially in Egypt, and, most recently, Johnson (2006) analyses the Life and Miracles in its literary context.

[37] Wilkinson (1999).

[38] There is a short description of the site in Hellenkemper (1995). Davis (2001) discusses further sites related to the cult of Thecla in Egypt.

[39] Hild and Hellenkemper (1990) 441.

[40] Here quoted from Hill (1996) 213.

Guyer and Herzfeld.[41] Even then the remains were sparse because of stone robbing. Later, in 1973, Gilbert Dagron visited the site as part of the research for his edition of the sources for St Thecla,[42] and more recently Stephen Hill has worked with the material.[43] One focus of these excavations has been to relate the site to the literary sources, with a particular debate over Thecla's cave, the actual place of her miraculous disappearance, and where and how it should be fitted into the architectural remains. The other focus has been the impressive remains themselves and how they should be related to the emperor Zeno (474–76/476–91) who is known to have patronised the cult.

The author[44] of the Life and the Miracles reveals himself at several places in the text and is evidently personally attached to the site and the cult of St Thecla.[45] The date of the Miracles, which comprises several redactions, is given as A.D. 430–70 by Dagron and therefore precedes the reign of Zeno, whereas the monumental buildings at Meriemlik are dated to the time of Zeno or thereafter. Consequently, we cannot seek for the remains of the building features described by the Miracles in the ruins as they appear today without careful analysis, a warning not always heeded in modern discussions of the site and particularly of Thecla's cave. Moreover, Dagron is of the opinion that the author of the Life adapted his account to the cult that he himself knew[46] and that the text reflects ongoing changes within the cult in the author's own lifetime.[47] Dagron thus sees a development in the text from the early Life to the later Miracles, and it is significant that the cave is only introduced in the Miracles, "timidement".[48] This analysis of the literary text in relation to the site and to the evolution of cult practices is of great interest in the context of other pilgrimage sites where we also possess good literary sources such as Resafah and Abu Mina, and here too we can see the agendas of the authors of these texts influencing their accounts of the sites they describe.

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[41] Guyer and Herzfeld (1930) 88–89; Hill (1996) 217.
[42] As above Dagron (1978).
[43] Hill (1996).
[44] It is clear from the analysis of Dagron (1978) that the author cannot be Basil of Seleucia, in whose writings the Life and Miracles are preserved (see also the review of Dagron by Herbert Hunger in JÖB 29 (1980) 373–76.) The author is still often cited as 'Basil', e.g., Hill (1996). For the date see Dagron (1978) 17–19 or Johnson (2006) 5–6.
[45] *Mir. Thecla* 28.27 (Dagron (1978) 281); and also 12, 31 and 41.
[46] Dagron (1978) 47.
[47] Dagron (1978) 53–54.
[48] Dagron (1978) 52.

Certain details provided by the written sources for Meriemlik remain enigmatic, including references to a bath and a *paradeision* or animal park, and the location of the reported copse with a spring which has not yet been identified with precision. There are also a number of unusual features of the remains excavated to date, such as the circular structure north-east of the main church complex and the pre-Constantinian *temenos* wall and columns reused in the cave church which suggest an earlier classical sanctuary at the site. Further links to a classical past are found in the vocabulary used by the author of the Life and Miracles, who refers to the veneration of pagan gods in Miracles 11 and 18,[49] and it seems probable that Meriemlik saw the Christian annexation of a pagan site.[50] It is also significant that there is as yet no record of pilgrim souvenir production at Meriemlik, either in the literary or the archaeological evidence. The Miracles do mention the sale of commodities at the site such as the soap sold outside the bath, but this would not necessarily require specifically designed containers.[51] This silence in our evidence is made all the more conspicuous by evidence of Thecla tokens produced in Egypt, possibly at the prolific site of Abu Mina.[52] Overall, however, there remains much work to be done and an urgent need for further excavation.

The cult of St John at Ephesus (Fig. 4) represents a different scenario. The sources for the early Christian period in Ephesus are abundant, and the pilgrimage shrine has been carefully excavated through yearly campaigns carried out by the Archaeological Institute of Vienna.[53] Of course, this is not the only Christian complex in Ephesus, and the entire city has long received close attention,[54] with excavation facilitated by the fact that most of the formerly inhabited area is now

[49] Dagron (1978) 92–94.

[50] Dagron (1978) 83; also in Hill (1996) 213 and 219 on the basis of the archaeological remains.

[51] *Mir. Thecla* 42. 20 (Dagron (1978) 401).

[52] See for example Davis (2001), App. A (16 nos.), where 16 is not a large number in the context of the production at Abu Mina. Thecla is with few exceptions not named on these tokens, but can be identified iconographically. Several other saints also occur on the Menas ampullae, most of whom are named, but precisely why they feature at Abu Mina is not yet explained. See Kaufmann (1910) 137–45.

[53] For yearly bibliographies, see *Mitteilungen des Christlichen Archäologie*.

[54] Ephesus was a city where St Paul preached, one of the churches mentioned in the Revelation of St John, and the site of two major church councils. See for example Friesinger and Krinzinger (1999); Koester (1995); Restle (1971); Büyükkolanci (1995) with bibliography. As Ephesus was the site of the famous cult of Artemis as well, we also have antique sources.

without settlement. Much modern research has focused on the Justinianic church of St John, mentioned by Procopius (*ca.* 560),[55] while Ephesus was also a major cult centre for the veneration of Mary, the seven sleepers, St Timothy and St Paul. According to Koester the community of the city exhibited remarkable diversity spanning from "prophetic-apocalyptic enthusiasm" to the "sacramental orientation of an Episcopal church".[56]

However, the greatest centre for pilgrimage in late antique Ephesus remained the shrine of St John. The apocryphal Acts of St John were condemned as heretical by Eusebius of Caesarea and in the 4th c. were considered a sectarian work,[57] but such "apocryphal romances about the apostles"[58] were widely read. The Acts describe how John ordered a trench to be dug beside a tomb outside the gates [of the city]. When the trench was finished, John took off his clothes, laid them as bedding, and then laid himself down and 'peacefully yielded up the ghost'.[59] This straightforward description is embellished in later editions of the Acts, and in the 5th c. manna dust or oil is reported issuing from the grave of the saint. This feature of the cult of St John in Ephesus was known in North Africa before 430, and although St Augustine in his homily on John 21:22 appears to be sceptical of such reports, he was not prepared to denounce the cult outright.[60] Gregory of Tours in the late 6th c. in his *Glory of the Martyrs* likewise mentions the manna 'like dust' that issued from the sleeping saint and was carried throughout the world,[61] and such reports persisted into medieval times. In his 14th c. world chronicle, Robert Muntaner in Spain[62] describes the relics and the cult of St John at Ephesus quite precisely: there is a slab with holes over the grave of the saint and the

[55] Proc. *Aed.* 5.1.4–6: The small and ruined church ('because of its great age') on the barren hill outside the city was torn down and replaced with a church comparable to the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople (Dewing's edition of *Aed.*: (1996) 316–19).

[56] Koester (1995) 139–40.

[57] Elliot (1993) 301.

[58] Chadwick (1993) 17.

[59] Elliot (1993) 338; for the manuscript tradition, see 303ff.

[60] Aug., *In Ioannis Evangelium Tractatus* 124 (Rettig (1995) 82–85).

[61] Van Dam (1988) 47–48. Gregory's account should be read in the context of his relatively slight knowledge of Eastern Christianity (11). Unfortunately there appears to be no evidence of what source Gregory used for his story about Ephesus.

[62] *The Chronicle of Muntaner* 206 (Goodenough (1920–21) 499). For an outline of the sources for the cult of St John see also Papaconstantinou (2001).

amount of dust issued on the day of his feast is 'three *cuarteras* of Barcelona', which is 213 litres.[63] Muntaner explicitly states that the issue of dust only happens on the feast day of the saint, from vespers until sunset on the next day.

Vera Zalesskaya in the Centenary Volume for the Austrian Ephesus excavations has suggested that a certain type of small ampulla were produced as containers for the holy dust of St John.[64] These small ampullae are not as commonly represented in publications as the larger types, but appear to be found in similar excavation contexts.[65] It is estimated that these small ampullae could contain perhaps 5 ml each, which on the much later and unconfirmed medieval report of 213 litres of holy dust would have required the use of more than 40,000 ampullae per year. However, in contrast to the numerous and widespread Menas ampullae from Abu Mina, relatively few of the small Ephesus ampullae have been found. Alternatively, the holy dust of St John may have been contained in Asia Minor ampullae[66] (Fig. 14), as has also been suggested on the grounds of iconography by Zalesskaya. But the purpose of these Asia Minor ampullae remains uncertain and it cannot be proven that they were produced in Ephesus.[67] Like Abu Mina, Ephesus was an internationally famous pilgrimage site, but while we would expect ampullae in comparable numbers to those of St Menas this does not appear to be the case.[68] Paradoxically, in the case of Ephesus we have very precise textual descriptions of the holy substance originating from Ephesus, in contrast to Abu Mina, but very little archaeological evidence for the containers for this substance or for their circulation in the wider Christian world.

The shrine of Sts Sergius and Bacchus at Resafah in Syria (fig. 5) offers yet another different model. Here we possess both published excavations,[69] although focused primarily on the largest of the four churches in the town, and literary sources. The sources relating to the

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[63] Dourster (1840) 450.

[64] Zalesskaya (1999).

[65] E.g. Campbell (1998) nos. 8–10; Wulff (1909) nos. 1355–56; Zalesskaya (1986).

[66] Duncan-Flowers (1990).

[67] Campbell (1998) suggests that they were manufactured and traded without a specific relationship to a site. See also Anderson (2004).

[68] See for example Anderson (2004) and the Ephesus bibliography in *Mitteilungen des Christlichen Archäologie*.

[69] The excavation reports are published by the German Archaeological Institute as "Resafa I–VI", by various authors, see also Ulbert (1993).

Fig. 14 Asia Minor ampulla (AN 1884.134, *ca.* 1:2, clay) (photo: Ashmolean Museum).

site have been carefully researched by Fowden.[70] The site was extremely wealthy with imperial patronage from both Byzantines and Persians,[71] and, in the ruins, floor mosaics of outstanding quality have been found. Excavation has also revealed the presence of undecorated glass ampullae, as seen elsewhere in Syria,[72] which were found next to the sarcophagus which held the saints' relics. The sarcophagus, as was common in Syrian church reliquary sarcophagi, had holes in the lid through which oil was poured onto the relics and a basin (still *in situ*) for collecting the oil sanctified by contact with the holy remains.[73] However, there are no containers obviously intended for transporting this holy liquid. The glass ampullae are mentioned by Fowden but not in connection with pilgrimage,[74] and the literary sources do not refer to the use of souvenirs at the site. Resafah provides remarkable evidence for the continuity of a pilgrim site, for it was in use from *ca.* A.D. 300–1250,[75] with the incorporation of a mosque in the main complex in the 8th c. Future excavation will hopefully reveal the auxiliary facilities not yet uncovered, such as the hostelries and the workshops producing the glass-flasks and perhaps other pilgrim souvenirs.

A final example is provided by the shrine of St Symeon the Elder at Qalʿat Simʿān (fig 6.), which is discussed further by Lukas Schachner elsewhere in this volume. Here again, there are both literary

[70] Fowden (1999), esp. 92–100 on pilgrimage.
[71] Fowden (1999) 139.
[72] Young (1995); Ulbert (1986) pl. 70 and 73, and Ulbert (1993) 121.
[73] For this Syrian practice see Donceel-Voûte (1995) 193–98 and n. 22 above.
[74] Fowden (1999) 86.
[75] Ulbert (1993) 127.

Fig. 15 Token featuring St Symeon (AN 1980.47, *ca.* 1:1, clay) (photo: Ashmolean Museum).

sources and archaeological remains, and, in this instance, the sources do refer to pilgrim tokens and some such tokens have been found (Fig. 15).[76] Qalʿat Simʿān is the famous hill-top sanctuary complex built around the column of Symeon the Stylite, while at the foot of the hill lies the less well-known village of Dayr Simʿān or Telanissos, in a monastery of which St Symeon lived before moving onto his column. The village has impressive quarters for housing pilgrims as well as several monasteries, but direct excavation has been limited. Analysis of the pilgrim tokens has confirmed that the mineral content of the clay is compatible with that of the local area.[77] However, no synthetic analysis of all the evidence from Qalʿat Simʿān has yet appeared to expand upon the short overview by Reekmans, which is now over twenty years old.[78]

Conclusions

Much work remains to be done at all of the pilgrimage sites that I have discussed in this short paper, but some conclusions can still be drawn. All of these sites have been excavated to some degree, and, where the general layout is visible, there are a number of intriguing parallels. Thus Abu Mina and Meriemlik both share a very similar layout in organisation and scale, with a roughly north-south processional road, a main sanctuary complex in a *temenos*, and further churches outside

[76] See e.g., Sodini (1993).

[77] Gerard et al. (1997), with further references such as Lafontaine-Dosogne (1967). See also Wamser (2004) 207–11.

[78] Reekmans (1980). For further bibliography see the article of Schachner later in this volume.

this *temenos*. Ephesus and Resafah, as important centres, had of course a number of ordinary churches, in addition to the pilgrim churches of St John and Sts Sergius and Bacchus respectively. It is tempting to consider this multiplicity of churches as entirely natural in the eastern Mediterranean, as different denominations could have each had their own individual church buildings. This has been argued for Abu Mina where the North Church has indigenous Egyptian features lacking in the central church complex, such as a *huron* partition wall closing the choir off from the nave as in 'Coptic' churches.[79] However, if we are to seek to identify separate denominational churches, we need to consider in what context such churches might be required. It is obvious from our literary sources, such as the miracles of St Menas, that diverse religious affiliation was not necessarily a hindrance to participation in feast days or indeed for seeking help from a given saint.[80] When does the need then arise for a separate church? Possibly a donation was received for the construction and maintenance of such a church, or other ecclesiastical or economic issues might be involved, such as support for pilgrims, and the need to control revenue from pilgrim activities. Such motives are very hard to trace in our sources or prove from material remains, and any conclusions must inevitably be highly circumstantial.

Another feature of a number of the sites that I have discussed is the production and circulation of pilgrim souvenirs and tokens. It is worth noting that at those sites where tokens have been found, such as Abu Mina and Qalʿat Simʿān, excavations have confirmed the use of tokens featuring depictions of figures other than the patron saint.[81] Seemingly, there existed in Antiquity a parallel phenomenon to the variety of stock in present day souvenir shops. This fact makes it more difficult to identify with certainty the origins of specific tokens, but it does not exclude the possibility of a central production site for different tokens, which could then be circulated and copied elsewhere. The sale of such souvenirs at sites other than their place of origin would

[79] Grossmann (2002) 409–410. A smaller church is located to the north of the main church at Meriemlik and Resafah as well: see Fowden (1999) and Guyer and Herzfeld (1930) respectively.

[80] Meinardus (1999) 99.

[81] Gerard et al. (1997); Kaufmann (1910), and above note 52, for the Thecla ampullae from Abu Mina.

Fig. 16 Token featuring Christ (AN 1872.1078, *ca.* 1:1, blue glass) (photo: Ashmolean Museum).

probably function then as now through reference to the original shrine and its saint.[82]

The sites considered in the preceding pages also share a further characteristic: being known both from textual evidence and through archaeology. There are of course many pilgrimage sites across the Mediterranean which do not share this advantage. A large building complex recently excavated in Carthage at Damous-el-Karita[83] (Fig. 7), dating to the 5th and 6th c., has been categorised as a pilgrim site due to the presence of facilities apparently designed to accommodate large numbers, yet there is no evidence for international pilgrimage, or to identify who may have been venerated there. The second building phase, seen illustrated, dates to the mid third of the 6th c., i.e., just after the Byzantine re-conquest of the area from the Vandals. This phase expanded and changed the orientation of the fairly new existing complex as well as adding a unique memorial complex in two stories. It could have been designed for a local saint, of whom Carthage has several,[84] but it is also conjectured that it could have

[82] Our evidence is further complicated by the survival of numerous tokens of uncertain provenance or identification (Fig. 16). Examples appear in almost all catalogues of early Christian art (see for example Wamser (2004)) and in numerous publications, including the so-called Asia Minor ampullae type studied by Anderson (2004) or the ex-votos featuring a pair of eyes or a female saint from a Syrian silver treasure published by Mango (1986) 242–45.

[83] Dolenz (2000) and (2001). It is without directly annexed hostels in the presently excavated area. The complex was extra-mural with the first building phase dated to around A.D. 400, on an area previously occupied by a private villa and a graveyard. The excavators suggest that the complex could be the Basilica Fausti mentioned in connection with 5th c. church councils: Dolenz (2001) 16–19.

[84] Carthage has several other known pilgrim sites. For examples, see Stevens, Kalinowski and van der Leest (2005); also Ennabli (1997).

been for an 'eastern' saint whose relics were translated there to support the Byzantine identity of the conquest.[85]

At the other extreme lies the shrine of Menouthis near Alexandria, where only written sources, notably Sophronius,[86] testify to the existence of a pilgrimage site now lost, possibly into the waters of the bay of Abuqir. Menouthis is said to have been comparable to Abu Mina as one of the two Egyptian pilgrim centres of greatest renown, although no evidence for pilgrim tokens from Menouthis has yet been found.[87] Even for those sites about which most is known the evidence, both literary and archaeological, must be handled with care, and there is still a need for further excavation and closer analysis of how text and material remains should be interpreted and combined.

Pilgrimage is a universal and 'popular' phenomenon in all periods of human history. It is a response to basic human emotions and needs such as hope, fear, illness, infertility and famine.[88] In Late Antiquity, pilgrimage to certain shrines at certain periods assumed particular significance, for ecclesiastical, political and economic as well as religious reasons. It is these great shrines that figure most prominently in our literary and archaeological record. We should consider this when we approach the complex variety of evidence that survives for pilgrimage in Late Antiquity. In reality, late antique pilgrimage occurred at many different levels and on a widely varying scale, and Christian pilgrimage continued to draw upon traditions that had a far longer history in the Mediterranean environment. The archaeology of pilgrimage has much to contribute to our knowledge of popular religion and of the social, economic and religious world of Late Antiquity.

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[85] Dolenz (2001) 103.
[86] *Miracula Cyri et Ioannis* (Marcos (1975)).
[87] Montserrat (1998). Work on the site is currently being done by Yvonne Stolz.
[88] See also the concept of the Holy Man: Brown (1982).

Appendix: Examples of Evidence from Selected Pilgrim Sites

Saint, Location	*Evidence*
Menas Abu Mina Alexandria	Excavation Written sources Souvenirs: clay ampullae, head-flasks, female statuettes, horse-rider statuettes, jugs and juglets
Thecla Meriemlik, Seleucia Cilicia	Some excavation Written sources No souvenirs
John Ephesus	Excavation Written sources No souvenirs?
Symeon Qalʿat Simʿān North Syria	Excavation Written sources Souvenirs: stamped clay tokens with palm impression on back
Cyrus and John Menouthis North Egypt	No excavation—yet Written sources No souvenirs
Sergius and Bacchus Resafah Syria	Excavation Written sources No souvenirs?—Glass ampullae
? Carthage	Excavation No written sources No souvenirs
Various saints Site unknown or no specific site	Souvenirs: clay ampullae, glass flasks, glass tokens

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE STYLITE

Lukas Amadeus Schachner

Πρὸς ὕφος ἀνήνεγκε τὸν Λοῦκαν στύλος
Λουκᾶς δὲ τὸν νοῦν πρὸς Θεὸν πρὸς ὃν τρέχει

The pillar has lifted Luke to the height;
Luke, in his turn, has lifted his spirit towards God, for whom he strives.[1]

Abstract

Stylites or pillar ascetics and their Syrian prototype, Symeon the Elder (d. 459), are well known from our literary sources and have been studied extensively within late antique historiography. This is in contrast to the far more limited attention that has been paid to the archaeological evidence of the stylites' pillars, their spatial setting and infrastructure, their representations and other material forms of evidence. This article seeks to outline what has been achieved so far on the archaeology of the stylites and proposes a possible agenda for future research, particularly in Syria and Mesopotamia. Such work, desperately needed, could also pave the road for a better understanding of the stylites' *Lebenswelten*, function and liturgy.

Introduction

Stylitism, living on a platform atop a pillar (*stylos*), and dendritism, living in a tree (*dendron*),[2] were extreme forms of asceticism in Late Antiquity. The late antique tradition of stylites or Christian pillar ascetics—"martyrs aériens",[3] "fakirs du christianisme"[4]—was a long and distinguished one going back, it seems, to the early 5th c. Initiated by Symeon the Elder, who climbed his first pillar in A.D. 412, this

[1] Anonymous. Quoted after Vanderstuyf (1914) 186.
[2] The present paper does not deal explicitly with dendritism and the dendrites. For an introduction to dendritism see Charalampidis (1995).
[3] Fernandez (1975) 195.
[4] Schlumberger and Dardel (1884) 411.

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striking tradition of extreme asceticism flourished (with some phases of interruption, especially after *ca.* 900) down to the 19th c.[5] Stylites, male and female,[6] who also practised many other forms of asceticism, were venerated at all strata of society for the mastery they showed over their own mortal bodies, and also over the forces of nature in general. The elevated position afforded by their pillars symbolised the isolation of these remarkable individuals from the concerns and sinfulness of ordinary material existence, and emphasised their status as beings whose way of life was closer to that of the angels (*aggelikos bios*) than of men:[7] standing half-way between heaven and earth, the stylites demonstrably enjoyed supernatural protection and favour. Consequently, they were respected and sought out as intermediaries who could effectively present the concerns of ordinary mortals to those who had power at the heavenly court. Atop their pillars, they were "literally in the world yet not of it".[8]

The world of the stylites can be reconstructed to a considerable extent through a number of texts and through material remains: from the Egyptian Thebaid to Moṣṣul in Mesopotamia, Constantinople and Gaul (Fig. 1). The *Lives*—in Greek, Syriac and Arabic—of at least ten stylites survive:[9]

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[5] For an historical outline ("Les stylites à travers les ages") see the fundamental studies by Delehaye (1962) cxvii–cxliii, and Peeters (1950) 93–136. There is still vigorous scholarly debate about the origins of this tradition in late antique *Oriens*, and whether the model for stylitism should be recognised in Hellenistic philosophy (e.g. the Dionysian *phallobatai* in Hierapolis/Syria) or Christianity (*imitatio Christi*); see Drijvers (1977) 63–76, Frankfurter (1990), Doran (1992) 29–36 and 39, and Trombley (1993) vol. 1, 163–64.

[6] On female stylitism, see Delehaye (1908).

[7] On stylitism and *aggelikos bios*, see Frank (1964) 20 and 67; *ibid.*, 35: "ein radikales Anderssein als die *kosmikē politeia*". In a *mīmrā* by Jacob of Serug (ed. *AMS* IV, 650–65), this parallel is made explicit: 'Symeon is not comparable to men, but to (the) angels' (transl. Ashbrook-Harvey (1990) 23). The homily likens the proto-stylite to Christ on the cross only at the moment of his death.

[8] Ashbrook-Harvey (1992) 10. On the rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity, and of Symeon in particular, see the homonymous articles by Brown (1971; 1998); similarly, on holy men and the urban and rural environment in northern Syria, Brown (1982).

[9] For these *Lives*, their editions and translations see the list of abbreviations at the end of this paper. The numbers in square brackets, following the name of a stylite or a stylite *martyrium*, refer to the entries in the gazetteer (below, pp. 381–6); in the main text, these numbers are only given at their first occurrence.

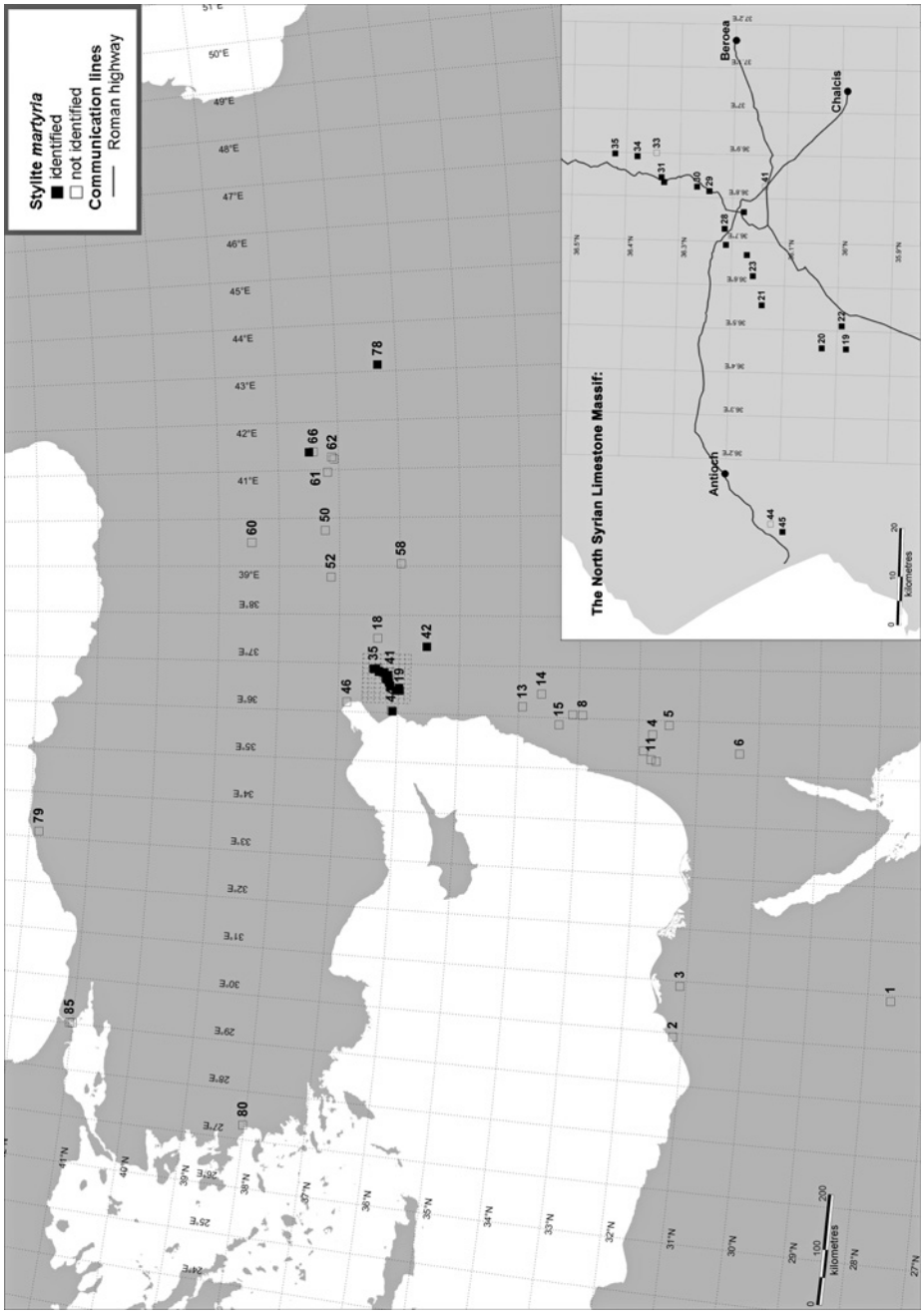

Fig. 1 Selected Stylite martyria referred to in the text and the gazetteer.

- of Symeon the Elder (d. 459), a native of Sīs near Nicopolis, and stylite above the Syrian village of Telneshē (Telanissos) for 47 years (present-day Qalʿat Simʿān) [31];
- of Daniel (d. 493), a native of Meratha near Samosata, stylite at Anaplous near Constantinople for 33 years [85];
- of Symeon the Younger (d. 592), a native of Antioch (his father was from Edessa in Osrhoene), stylite on the Wondrous Mountain (present-day Saman Dağı) near Antioch for 51 years (after having practiced stylitism with John [44] for 13 years) [45];
- of Abraham and Mārūn (6th c.), natives of Kalesh on the Armenian border, stylites in Ingilene for 38 and 29 years respectively [60];
- of Alypius (d. *ca.* 620), a native of Adrianople in Paphlagonia, stylite near Hadrianopole for 53 years [79];
- of Symeon 'of the Olives', stylite in the Monastery of the Column near Nisibis until his ordination as a bishop in 700 [62];
- of Timothy (d. *ca.* 830), a native of Kākhushtā in the Syrian limestone massif, stylite in his native village [26];
- of Luke (d. 979), a native of Attyokōmē (thema of Anatolikon), stylite at Eutropius near Chalcedon/Constantinople for 44 years [86];
- of Lazarus (d. 1054), a native of Magnesia on the Meander and a stylite on four different pillars who finally settled on Mount Galesion (present-day Alaman Dağı) near Ephesus for over 40 years [80].

Any attempt to draw together the evidence of the *Lives* with the surviving material remains of the world of the stylites, however, immediately encounters a number of significant problems. In particular, the terms used to designate stylites and their pillars in our textual sources are often highly ambiguous. Does the appearance of terms like *stylos* or *stylitēs* necessarily reveal the presence of a pillar or a pillar ascetic—a 'stylite'—at a given site? Is a pillar the only characteristic feature that enables us to identify a potential stylite site? And is the name stylite reserved in our sources solely for those we might describe as pillar ascetics?

Festugière and Delehaye, who were the first to work on the textual evidence for the stylites and their "realienkundliche Hintergrund", highlighted the frequent connection between the pillar of a stylite and an enclosure that characterises many 'stylite *martyria*' (e.g. the *egkleistērios stylos* in the Monastery of the Egkleistra of Neophytos).[10] Lamoreaux,

[10] Festugière (1961) vol. IV/1, 41, n. 2; Delehaye (1962) cxxxii, cxxxviii and clix; Congourdeau (1993) 139–49. For this connection between the pillar and an enclosure there is an archaeological parallel (see further below).

the editor of the Arabic *Life* of Timothy, made the same connection: Timothy, the North Syrian stylite in Jabal Bārishā, is referred to as a recluse (*ḥabīs*), who dwelled in an enclosure (*ḥubs*). An explicit link between the *ḥ-b-s* and the stylite's pillar is then made in *L.Timothy (Styl.)* (S), 44.1, a passage that refers to the blessed recluse (the *ḥabīs*) who lived atop a pillar (*ʿamūd*). This association of terms—*ʿumūd al-ḥabīs* ('pillars of the recluse')—has a further parallel in the Arabic *Life* of Christopher.[11] In Syriac, the ambiguity of the term 'pillar' (*esṭunā*) is even more apparent, as the Syriac term *esṭunā* can also mean 'tower'. Most stylites—*esṭunāyē* or *esṭunārē*—were indeed of Syriac origin, and the physical resemblance of pillar and tower has led to a certain degree of semantic interchangeability in Syriac texts.[12] In *L.Luke Styl.*, chaps. 5 and 7 it is said that: 'They (i.e. the stylites) refused to live on the ground, and lifted themselves up atop tower-like pillars (*pyrgoeideis*), i.e. columns of enormous height'. In the 9th c., the same Life describes Daniel's pillar at Anaplous near Constantinople with the same term, *pyrgoeidēs*.[13] The archaeological evidence of aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa [23] in Jabal Barīshā, has likewise established a link between the Arabic term *ṣawmaʿa* ('place of a recluse', 'a monk's *manār*') which gave the site its name[14] and an impressive pillar, which still lies on the ground.

The ambiguity of the term 'stylite' can also be traced in contemporaneous and later texts in Coptic, Greek and Slavonic. In two 5th c. (Coptic) Shenoutean canons for the monks of the White Monastery (Dayr Anbā Shinūda) in Egypt, which declare that 'No person (i.e. monk) shall be timid as he preaches from the *styllos*' and 'No person shall draw it out beyond the limit as he preaches from the *styllos*', the Greek loan-word *styllos* was used. Recently, the editor of these texts, Layton, has suggested translating these passages 'as he preaches from the pulpit',[15] which raises the question whether the term *styllos* could

[11] Lamoreaux and Cairala (2000) 519, n. 78.

[12] See Delehaye (1962) cxxxv, Palmer (1990) 105 and 218 (= no. A.13), and Mango (2005) 340–42. For the archaeological implications of this resemblance see below, p. 337.

[13] *L.Luke Styl.*, chap. 7. Note, however, that Daniel's pillar, which will also be discussed in the following sections, was in many respects highly exceptional.

[14] Lane (1872) 1728. See also *maḥall aṣ-ṣawm*, 'place of (Christian) station' (Lane (1872) 1750).

[15] Communication given at *The Administration of Monastic Estates in Late Antique and Early Islamic Egypt: A Symposium in Memory of Sarah Clackson*, held at Christ Church College, Oxford, 25–26 September 2004. Layton's paper is expected to appear shortly as "The Monastic Rules of Shenoute", edited by A. Boud'hors, J. Clackson and P. M. Sijpesteijn (American Studies in Papyrology).

actually denote such a feature (for which there is an archaeological equivalent)[16] or whether we should rather assume the presence of pillar ascetics within that monastery. Several centuries later in Asia Minor, the term stylite could be used for ascetics who did not live on pillars at all. On the contrary, these ascetics lived on top of rock formations that resembled pillars, and yet are referred to in our sources as 'stylite recluses'. These men had never climbed a 'true' pillar but perceived themselves as 'stylites' (*en stylō*), probably in order to express their association with the legacy of Symeon the Elder, their Syrian model.[17] The same (self-) perception seems also to underlie *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 41,[18] and the epithet *tou Stylou* given to the 10th c. Monastery of the Mother of God on Mount Latros, the ancient Latmos north-west of Miletus.[19] Similarly, we read that in Thessaly, near Stagi (present-day Kalambaka), Athanasius the Meteorite (d. 1383), the founder of the Monastery of the Transfiguration (*Metamorphosis*), lived near a chapel ('of the Archangels') which was carved out of the living rock. As this site was also situated within towering rock formations, this rock, too, used to be called Stylos, or the Pillar,[20] and Gregory, Athanasius' master and the founder of an ascetic community north of the Pillar, was given the title the Stylite as his epithet. Finally, Lenhoff has brought to our attention another case of ambiguity, of St. Niketas, a 12th c. monk from the homonymous Russian monastery in Pereslavl'-Zalesskii. Though Niketas was called a 'stylite' (*stolpnik*) and his *Life* mentions a pillar (*stolp*), most likely, according to Lenhoff, the *stolpnik*

[16] For a 'true' pulpit, flanked by two columns, see the one excavated at the monastery of Apa Jeremiah near Saqqārā; see Quibell (1912) 7 and pl. 14. This pulpit at Saqqārā, which resembles a later Islamic *minbar*, was indeed used to preach to the community (a Coptic inscription mentions Paiom the lector).

[17] Schiemenz (1969) 254.

[18] Namely of a 'stylite', who lived on Petra above the village: '[Lengths of] wood had been fastened to the rock with other [slats] lying flat on top of them, and there was a rope tied at both ends on either side, which those going up used as a guide'.

[19] For a description of the site and its *typikon*, see Wiegand (1913) 65–72, Janin (1969) 216–40, 441–54, Peschlow-Bindokat (1996) and Thomas, Hero and Constable (1998) vol. 1, 135–39.

[20] Nicol (1975) 92–93; *ibid.*, 94: '…to remove himself further Athanasius decided to climb to the very top of one of the rocks […] he took a ladder and climbed up one of the smaller pillars, where he built for himself a hut (*kalybē*). Then he moved higher, to a site known as the Broad Rock (that he called Meteōron, i.e. "suspended" or "floating in the air"), with a flat and spacious plateau on its summit—one side open, the other screened by a rock […] like a roof garden, planted with trees, shrubs and flowers and "generally most agreeable"'.

rather retreated to an earthen shelter, a "pillar-like round pit", which was connected to the monastery.[21]

From *stylitēs* to *stolpnik*: the terms used to designate pillars and pillar ascetics in our textual sources are by no means unambiguous. This is reflected in the gazetteer at the end of this paper, where a number of the 'stylites' included cannot necessarily be proven to have been true pillar ascetics[22] or are listed as 'not identified'. Nevertheless, this paper aims to reconsider the world of the stylites from an archaeological and material perspective and to provide as comprehensive and systematic an inventory as possible for the extant physical evidence of the stylites. It focuses on the pillar, which is *the* diagnostic module of any known stylite habitat; on the stylite monastery; on pilgrimage; and on stylite pillars and landscape archaeology.

The Pillar

Essentially, a stylite pillar consists of three parts: a base, a shaft (often composed of three drums, recalling the Holy Trinity),[23] and some sort of platform for the ascetic to live on at the top. A ladder was the usual means to facilitate communication between the stylite and the community on the ground.

The Base

To date, a considerable number of pillar bases have been identified in various stylite *martyria* and monasteries (Table 1 and Fig. 2a–d). These bases were either square or cylindrical (Table 1: '□'/'○'), and were—with only a few exceptions—set against or carved from the living rock. All in all, the design of most bases can be described as

[21] Lenhoff (1999) 332–37. Lenhoff's conclusion, based on Niketas' *Life*, is in marked contrast to the local tradition, according to which St. Niketas did mount an actual (wooden) pillar—his pillar is depicted in various iconographic representations and, most recently, in the frescoes of the saint on his pillar in the newly painted church at Optina Monastery. Optina Pustyn near Kozelsk was one of the first abbeys to be returned to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1987. I am grateful to Mother Nectaria (Carolyn McLees), who gathered this information and images of the shelter and pillar in Pereslavl'-Zalesskii for me.

[22] E.g. Matthew, stylite in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn [68].

[23] See, e.g., *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chap. 113.

a: Dayr al-Malik [21], looking north-east (photo: M. Schachner, 2005).

b: Kafr Daryān [24], looking west (photo: the author, 2005).

c: Kīmār [35], looking north-east (photo: the author, 2003).

d: Wondrous Mountain [45], looking south-west; the 'monolithic staircase' is visible on the left (photo: the author, 2003).

Fig. 2 Pillar bases.

comparatively simple (i.e. a cube or cylinder), and only at Qalʿat Simʿān, the Wondrous Mountain (Fig. 2d) and Mār Lazarus monastery near Ḥabsenus [72] (Fig. 3b) do the bases reflect some degree of conceptual sophistication.[24] The post holes at Qalʿat Simʿān, first noted by Krencker,[25] and at Dayr al-Malik [21] (Fig. 2a) also suggest the existence of screens surrounding the column bases. Similarly, the dowel holes on the Wondrous Mountain suggest—in accordance with the *Life* of Symeon[26]—the existence of a rectangular balustrade (Figs. 2d and 7b). A base with steps of stone was also erected at Anaplous for the stylite Daniel.[27]

The Shaft

The heights of the stylites' pillars (up to 17.64 m or 40 cubits, excluding the base) must have astonished their fellow men in Antiquity, as much as they astonish scholars and tourists today. The numbers of cubits (and their symbolism) play a prominent role in the *Lives* of the stylites and in several famous cases increase in height across a stylite's life. Symeon the Elder, the proto-stylite, climbed several pillars during his ascetic career, and may have set the model for later stylites, including Daniel, Symeon the Younger, Alypius and Lazarus.[28] Symoen the Elder first experimented with a wooden prototype while still living in a monastic community near Ṭall ʿAdē (Teleda) (i.e. before 412), and then occupied three increasingly higher pillars, made of local limestone, above Telneshē: these are described as 4 cubits (1.76 m), 30 cubits (13.23 m) and 40 cubits (17.64 m) high respectively.[29] At some

[24] In the bas-reliefs depicting the column of Symeon the Elder, compiled by Elbern (1965), the representations of the base are surprisingly homogenous: the reliefs, which have been found all over Syria—from the surroundings of Ḥamāh, Aleppo and Sidon (see further below)—show a square, two-step arrangement, basically what can still be seen at Qalʿat Simʿān today. Furthermore, the bases shown in the reliefs found at Qaṣr Abū Samrā and Jibrīn exhibit some sort of openings (*ibid.*, 281, fig. 1, and 283, fig. 3 (= Fig. 14c)), likely to fulfill liturgical functions; these openings were similar to those in the shaft (see further below and n. 70).

[25] Krencker (1939) 7 and pl. 7, 10.

[26] *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chaps. 113, 134 and 221.

[27] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 30 and 86.

[28] Other stylites took over, e.g., honorific or temple columns, which was the case with Vulfilaic [87] near Trier in Gaul.

[29] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Ant.*, chaps. 12 and 17. Different numbers are given by Theodoret (*L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Theod*, chap. 12: 6/12/22/36 cubits), Barṣawmā (Nau (1913) 382), who visited the stylite on his second journey back from Jerusalem

point, we also read, Mār Bas(sos) set up a stone in the vicinity of Symeon's pillar, and stood on it—his stone, presumably a 'training pillar', was only 2 cubits (0.88 m) high.

The other stylite who climbed three pillars was Symeon's disciple, Daniel, whose location at Anaplous near Constantinople was particularly stunning, as the holy man overlooked the shores of the Bosphorus. However, while there is no evidence of patronage in the *Lives* of Daniel's master and model Symeon, Daniel's position near Constantinople was markedly different. His first pillar was supplied by an imperial guardsman, the second by Gelanius, a steward at the imperial court, and the third by Leo, the emperor himself.[30] Even though, unfortunately, there is no archaeological evidence for Daniel's pillars, a few details in his *Life* are unique and highly relevant here. Daniel's first pillar seems to have been erected to precise measurements, but it seems not to have been very high, as when the holy man once came down about six rungs of the ladder, only a few rungs were left for Daniel to reach the ground.[31] Daniel's second pillar was a 'double column' and bore a unique inscription, namely four couplets by Cyrus of Panopolis (d. *ca.* 470). These lines, which constitute the only known 'pillargramme',[32] are preserved in the so-called Palatine Anthology in the hereditary Palatine Library of Heidelberg, as well as in the *Life* of the holy man:

> Standing twixt earth and heaven a man you see
> Who fears no gales that all about him fret;
> Daniel's his name, Great Symeon's 'rival' he;
> Upon a double column firm his feet are set;
> Ambrosial hunger, bloodless thirst support his frame
> And thus the Virgin Mother's Son he doth proclaim.[33]

(on the authenticity of Barṣawmā's account, see Honigmann (1954) 18–19), and the Syriac *Lives: L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chap. 110, also mentions the 40 cubits in the last pillar phase; see Doran (1992) 16–17. In 1938, the German team at Qalʿat Simʿān found what they thought to be (three) fragments of the pillar of Symeon (Krencker (1939) 6 and pl. 14). These measured 0.9 m in diameter—most likely, these constituted the upper drums.

[30] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 21, 23; 30, 32, 33, 34; 38, 44, 47 and 48.

[31] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 25 and 28.

[32] The only other (non-literary) inscription to be found on a pillar comes from Mār Lazarus monastery [76] near Ḥabsenus in Mesopotamia; see Palmer (1990) 217 (= no. A.9).

[33] Ed. and transl. Paton (1927) 42–43 (= no. 99) and *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 36; see Delehaye (1896).

Like Daniel's second pillar, his third pillar, too, was a 'double column' with 'planks laid to form a bridge from one ladder to another'. Then, at some point after 465, a strong gale put Daniel's 'double column' to a hard test:

> For some reason the column had not been properly secured, it was torn from its supports on either side and was only kept together by the iron bar which held the two columns in the middle. Thus you could see the double column swaying to and fro with the just man. […] His disciples sought to underpin it with iron bars, but one swing of the column smashed them, too.[34]

Most other stylite texts prove inconclusive as to the heights of the pillars—some, it seems, were indeed relatively low,[35] and only the pillar of Timothy at Kākhushtā is described as 'very tall'.[36] The archaeological evidence of known pillars (eighteen in total, summarised in table 1) provides a more differentiated picture, but confirms the impression given by the sources and shows the range of heights varying from *ca.* 4.5 m to 'very tall'. Two observations visible from table 1 are particularly intriguing. On the one hand, some of the preserved 'very high' pillars were actually situated either on flat and open terrain (e.g. at aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, Kīmār [35], Androna [42]) or on markedly elevated terrain (Jabal Srīr [27], Jabal Shaykh Barakāt [30], Qalʿat Simʿān, Wondrous Mountain), where the 'additional' height would have had only a minor impact on the visibility of the holy man. On the other hand, some of the pillars of 'medium' height (e.g. Khirbat as-Sarj [20], Kafr Daryān [24], Dayr Ṭūrmanīn [29], Mār Lazarus monastery near Ḥabsenus) may in fact resemble Daniel's first pillar as well as the pillars of Luke and Lazarus in being built to a height that seems to have been ideally suited to facilitate communication with the ground. The

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[34] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 47.

[35] E.g. near Petra (*Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 129): 'Whenever a brother said to him (i.e. to the stylite): "I wish to tell you a (private) thought", the stylite would reply in a gentle voice: "Come to the base of the column", and he would himself move to the other side of the plinth. Thus placed, they could converse: the stylite on high, the brother down below. And none of the others who were standing there could hear what was being said'. Such must also have been the situation at Luke's pillar which, according to his *Life*, was 12 cubits (5.29 m) high (chap. 23); similarly on Mount Galesion, where Lazarus could conduct normal conversations with the people on the ground (*L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 57, 108, 120, 128 and 142). Lazarus could even be reached with a pole (*ibid.*, 225).

[36] G32, the Georgian version of Timothy's *Life*; see Lamoreaux and Cairala (2000) 519, n. 78.

ideal arrangement to facilitate such communication may have been that reconstructed by Tchalenko at Kafr Daryān, where a 6th c. balcony facing the pillar (a 'visitors' platform') provided controlled access to the stylite at certain times (Fig. 3a).[37] Similarly, the open gallery at Ḥabsenus to the east of the pillar (with a staircase leading up from the court) could well have served the same purpose (Fig. 3b). The only reference to a visitors' platform in our textual sources is found in the *Life* of Lazarus of Mount Galesion.[38]

Table 1. Stylite pillars: dimensions of bases and shafts.[39]

Location Name of the stylite	Height of the column shaft (m)	Diameter of the column shaft (m)	Number of Drums	Column base and shape	Combined height of shaft and base (m)
Syria					
Musrasras 'Symeon III' [19]				□	
Khirbat as-Sarj Sergios (?) [20]	5.10	max. 1.15 1.00 (fragm. 1) 0.98 (fragm. 2) 0.93 (fragm. 3)	3 fragments	h. 1.50 sides 10.85 sqm □	min. 6.60
Dayr al-Malik [21]		max. 1.25	1 fragment	h. 1.20 sides 13.92 sqm □	
Aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa [23]	13.98	1.10 (drum 1) 0.94 (drum 2) 0.75 (drum 3)	originally 3; 8 fragments	h. min. 2.00 (?) ○	*ca.* 14[40]

[37] Some popular stylites could well have established something resembling 'visiting hours', as in *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Theod.*, chap. 26: 'He (Symeon the Elder) can be seen judging and delivering verdicts that are right and just. These and similar activities he performs after the ninth hour [presumably the 'rush-hour' at the base of the pillar]—for the whole night and the day till the ninth hour he spends praying. But after the ninth hour he first offers divine instruction to those present, and then, after receiving each man's request and working some cures, he resolves the strife of those in dispute. At sunset he begins his converse from then on with God'. On the daily routine of a stylite as reflected in the textual sources, see, amongst others, Delehaye (1962), cxliv–clxxvi, and Doran (1992) 18–23 and 29–36.

[38] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 81.

[39] Unless otherwise stated (e.g. at Qalʿat Simʿān), these figures are derived from the published record (references to the gazetteer in square brackets) and from personal observations of the surviving remains.

[40] The base at aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, made of solid ashlar, surrounded and stabilised (rather than simply supported) the column shaft.

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Location Name of the stylite	Height of the column shaft (m)	Diameter of the column shaft (m)	Number of Drums	Column base and shape	Combined height of shaft and base (m)
Kafr Daryān Jōnān [24]	*ca.* 7	max. 1.00 min. 0.75 (?)[41]	1; 4 fragments	h. 1.00 sides 7.56 sqm □	*ca.* 8
Jabal Srīr Jōḥannān (?) [27]	*ca.* 12		3	none	*ca.* 12
Burdaqlī [28]			3 fragments	□	
Dayr Ṭūrmanīn, west of Abraham (?) [29]	4.48		originally 2 (?)	□	min. 4.48
Jabal Shaykh Barakāt [30]	*ca.* 16			○	min. *ca.* 16
Qalʿat Simʿān Symeon the Elder [31] L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr.Theod. *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V)	preserved: 8.80 reconstructed: 15.88, or 17.64 (40 cubits)	max. 2.00 (min. 1.80–1.90)[42]	originally 3; 3 fragments	h. 1.50 sides bottom: 3 sqm top: 2 sqm □	preserved: 10.30 reconstructed: 17.38, or 19.14
Dayr Simʿān, west of North-West Monastery [32]	5.90	min. 0.78	originally 1; 4 fragments	h. 0.60 sides: 3.61 sqm □	6.50 (?)
Qaṣr Brād [34]	*ca.* 8	*ca.* 0.8	5 fragments	h. 0.33 sides: 13.32 sqm □	*ca.* 8 (?)
Kīmār[43] [35]	*ca.* 15	max. 1.18 min. 0.84	originally 3; 10 fragments	h. 0.95 sides 3.73 sqm ○	*ca.* 16
Qurzēḥil John (IV) [36] John (VI) [37]				sides 2.49 sqm ○	

[41] Djobadze (1986) 63. Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 95, on the other hand, measured the diameter as 1.00 m close to the pillar base. Unfortunately, I have no personal record to resolve this difference.

[42] These numbers, given by Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 63, seem far too high; see above, n. 29.

[43] Numbers calculated by Lassus (1947) 277, n. 7, and revised by Callot (1989) 113, n. 28.

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Location Name of the stylite	Height of the column shaft (m)	Diameter of the column shaft (m)	Number of Drums	Column base and shape	Combined height of shaft and base (m)
Androna Jacob (?) [42]	10.81	max. 0.82 min. 0.66	8 fragments	none (?)	min. 10.81
Wondrous Mountain[44] Symeon the Younger [45]	preserved: 0.95 reconstructed: 6.21–9.25, or 5.39–6.79, or 15.20	at bottom: 1.90 at top: 1.60	7 fragments	total h. 3.20 sides bottom: 6.50 sqm top: 2.50 sqm □	preserved: 4.15 reconstructed: 9.41–12.45, or 8.59–9.99, or 18.40
Mesopotamia					
Mār Lazarus monastery, near Ḥabsenus [76]	5.50	2.42 (outside) 0.80 (inside)	(masonry)	h. 1.50 sides 19.20 sqm □	7.00
Dēr Stūnē [77]	6.50–7.00	at bottom: 1.70 square at top: 1.50 square	(masonry)	none	6.50–7.00

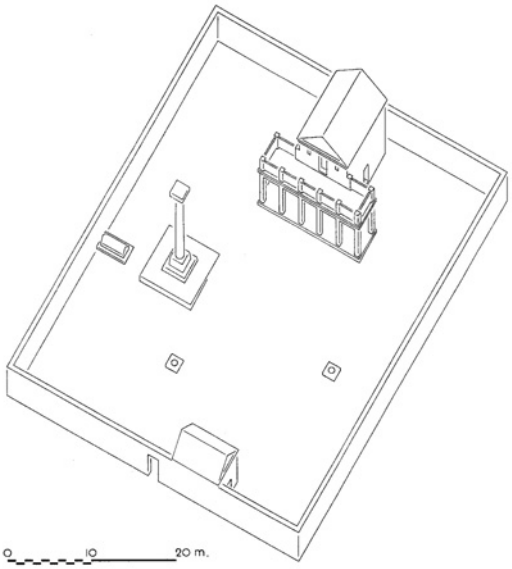
The construction of the shafts of these pillars (with the exception of the masonry ones)[45] appears to have been fairly uniform. All surviving remains show smooth and often polished surfaces, and all the pillars in Table 1 were made of limestone except for the one at Androna which is of basaltic stone. For the shafts depicted in the bas-reliefs at Kafr ʿArūq and Qalblōze, which also show diagonal fluting,[46] there is no archaeological parallel. Violent winds, accompanied by thunderstorms, constituted a constant threat both to the lives of the stylites[47] and to the

[44] See Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 61–65.

[45] A late representation of Symeon the Elder at the Meteorite monastery of St. Barlaam (1548) depicts Symeon's pillar as made of masonry/bricks (?) rather than stone (Xyngopoulos (1949) 123, fig. 2).

[46] Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1987) 118, fig. 107.

[47] E.g. the holy man's clothes being taken off by a storm: *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 52; (nearly) carried away: *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chap. 23; electrocuted by lightning: *Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 57; the pillars overturned: *An. Chron. ad a. 1234*, chap. 126 (A.G. 954/ A.D. 642–43): '*flatus ventorum vehemens columnas plures beatorum stylitarum e suis locis evertit*', ed. Chabot (1920); transl. Chabot (1937). See also Theophanes, *Chronicle*, AM 6139/ A.D. 646–47, ed. De Boor (1883); transl. Mango, Scott and Greatrex (1997). Cold and gales were the other dangers: Luke, while still living on a pillar in Phrygia, felt particularly threatened by the elements (*L.Luke Styl.*, chap. 24), and for Vulfilaic, according to Gregory of Tours, Gaul was obviously a particularly inhospitable environment.



a: Kafr Dayrān [24] (isometric reconstruction); the tomb is visible on the left of the pillar base (source: Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 2, pl. LXXXVIII).

b: Ḥabsenus [76], looking north-east (photo: the author, 2005).

Fig. 3 'Visitors' platforms'.

pillars themselves. As the diameters of the shafts were mostly extremely small in comparison to their heights (and all pillars were either cylindrical or slightly conical), in several cases metal clamps and metal collars were employed to ward off any horizontal movement and to increase the stability of the shafts (as was the iron bar used in Daniel's third pillar). Such clamps (and their holes) have been meticulously studied by Callot and others on the pillars at aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, Srīr (Fig. 7a), west of Dayr Ṭūrmanīn (Fig. 4b), Jabal Shaykh Barakāt, Kīmār (Figs. 4c–d) and Dayr Simʿān, west of the North-West Monastery [32]. The evidence of distinctive holes for such clamps has also played a role in the identification as stylite columns of the remains at Khirbat as-Sarj (Fig. 4a) and at Androna (Fig. 6b).[48] Inversely, one could argue from a statistical perspective that if the pillars of 'medium' height—i.e. at Khirbat as-Sarj (height: min. 6.6 m), Dayr Ṭūrmanīn (min. 4.48 m) and Dayr Simʿān (6.5 (?) m))—had clamps other than those for fixing the platform, their original shafts may presumably have been substantially longer than their remains suggest. Unfortunately, these *martyria* have been severely damaged, and none of their shafts are complete today.

The 'clamped' pillars at Kīmār and Androna still lie on the ground as they fell (namely both lying to the east; Fig. 6), which also raises the question of their demolition, i.e. whether their collapse resulted from human agency[49] or seismic activity.[50] The latter hypothesis is particularly puzzling, as another 'clamped' pillar, that at aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, not very distant from Kīmār, fell in the opposite direction, to the west.[51] Undoubtedly, as to the stability of the pillars, the few masonry pillars stand out for their superiority. Yet apart from one textual reference to such a construction at the monastery of the Theotokos (Lazarus' second pillar, built around 1030/31),[52] the masonry pillars at Dēr Stūnē

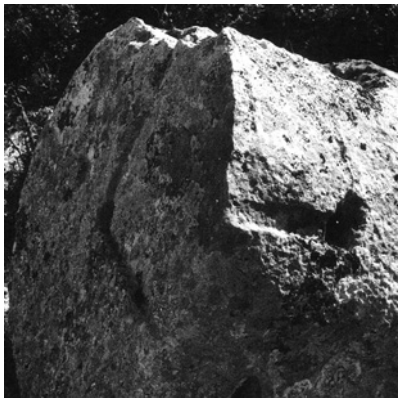
[48] The pillar at Androna shows some peculiarities, which will be presented in the excavators' final report (in preparation).

[49] See, e.g., the *An. Chron. ad a. 1234*, chap. 106, on Abū Bakr (632–34), where the caliph of the *futūḥ* ordered the troops of the Saracens not to harm monks, nor to drive the stylites from their columns.

[50] For earthquakes in the Levant and their chronology, see Amiran, Arieh and Turcotte (1994) 265–91.

[51] Castellana (1979) 214 explains its demolition by human activity ("colonna abbattuta"). Note that the construction of aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa should have provided particular stability (see above, n. 39).

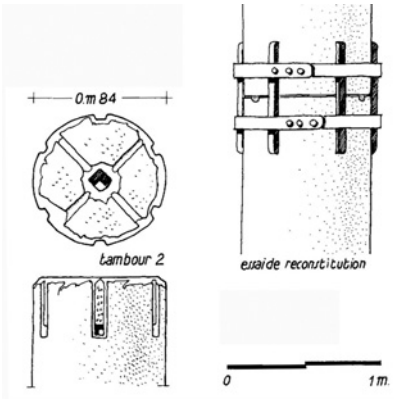
[52] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 58.



a: Khirbat as-Sarj [20]: top (?) column drum (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (2003) 65).

b: West of Dayr Ṭūrmanīn [29]: column drum (photo: the author, 2005).

c: Kīmār [35]: column drum (photo: the author, 2003).



d: Kīmār [35]: column drums (cross-section and reconstruction) (source: Callot (1989) 115, fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Pillar shafts: metal clamps.

[77] and near Ḥabsenus in Mesopotamia, with unfinished ashlar in the interior allowing access to the platform (often misleadingly referred to in modern literature as a 'staircase'), have no archaeological parallel in Syria; nor is there archaeological evidence of another 'double column', as described in the *Life* of Daniel.

In the *Lives* of the stylites, on the bas-reliefs and on the eulogy flasks depicting the Symeons,[53] a ladder is a constantly recurring theme. In the texts, these ladders occur in a number of contexts, allowing visitors (often clergy) to ascend,[54] more rarely allowing the stylite to descend,[55] and also making possible the deposition of the mortal remains of the stylites for burial. To bring down the body of Daniel, spiral scaffolding was erected around the base of his pillar.[56] As some ladders were meant to bridge gaps of up to 18 metres, mounting these ladders without risking the stability of the pillar must in some cases have been a difficult enterprise. The *Lives* are silent about this issue, with the exception of one reference in the *Life* of Daniel that one day, again due to a tempest, the ladder could not be set up.[57] However, this and related passages in the *Lives* of other pillar ascetics suggest removable rather than permanent ladders, as also at Qalʿat Simʿān, the Wondrous Mountain and Kākhushtā.[58] Furthermore, the ability to remove these ladders (or, at least, parts of the ladders, e.g. the top) emerges from these texts as another necessity—it was essential for the stylite to be able to withdraw from the *kosmikē politeia* and to maintain a certain amount of privacy.[59]

There are virtually no archaeological remains of these ladders, but one may still reconstruct such devices by considering the issue inductively. In particular, if a pillar was 'very tall', there is no doubt as to the basic, 'technical' requirements: the ladder had to be stable (difficult to imagine, given the length), of reasonable weight (for it had to be

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[53] On the iconographic representations of the pillar ascetics, see further below.

[54] E.g., *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (BL), chap. 27; *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 42, 43, 95 and 96; *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chaps. 113 and 134; *L.Abraham/Mārūn*; *L.Timothy (Styl.)* (P), chap. 19.3; *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 87.

[55] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 28. Descending was more frequent among those stylites who directed entire communities and had to sort out 'business affairs'; see below, n. 97.

[56] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 92, 94, 99 and 100.

[57] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 52.

[58] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (BL), chap. 27; *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 8 (Symeon the Elder) and 42; *L.Timothy (Styl.)* (P), chap. 19.3. On the Wondrous Mountain, see Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 69, n. 269, and below.

[59] On controlled access to the stylite and the issue of timing, see above, p. 340.

lifted and removed in a pre-aluminium age), and able to be fixed in a vertical position when mounted (to keep the horizontal movement to a minimum). Callot's revised reconstruction of a (possible) ladder on Jabal Srīr (height of the pillar: *ca.* 12 m)[60] takes all these requirements into account (Fig. 7a): the ladder would have been vertical, (presumably) semi-permanent, and only the upper part of the ladder could be removed. A more sophisticated (but also heavier) arrangement has been suggested for the pillar of Symeon the Younger on the Wondrous Mountain above Antioch: here, a 'monolithic staircase', which resembles a pulpit and rises from the south of the *martyrium's* octagon, could have supported a triangular construction or scaffolding of wooden beams (Figs. 7b and 2d). The upper part of that staircase, which rises 3.3 m above the ground, seems to have served as a 'lower platform',[61] and it is imaginable that Symeon used to be addressed from the top of that staircase, and not necessarily from the scaffolding.[62] On the other hand, Symeon's *Life* leaves no doubt as to the fact that the holy man also received visitors on top of his 'upper platform', as we will see below.

Alongside the metal clamps, collars and ladders, various other objects could be attached to the pillars of the ascetics, and some of these objects may eventually still be traced through signs of wear: e.g. the chain at Kākhushtā[63] or the shackles with which Timothy the holy man of that site silenced a gyrovague (Timothy's pillar, unfortunately, has not been identified).[64] Similarly, the precise function of the niches that can still be observed on the pillar shafts at Musrasras [19] (Fig. 5a; also Fig. 14a–d), west of Dayr Ṭūrmanīn,[65] at Androna,[66] on various steles and at Qalblōzē on a bas-relief[67] has not yet been fully explained. These openings could have held vessels containing the Eucharist (such vessels are known from the *Life* of Symeon the Elder), relics of the deceased stylite,[68] or icons, as suggested by Peña at Dayr Ṭūrmanīn.[69]

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[60] Callot and Gatier (2004) 594, fig. 6, which is a revised reconstruction of Callot (1989) 119, fig. 9.
[61] So Callot (1989) 120–21, and fig. 10.
[62] Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 69, and fig. XXI.
[63] *L. Timothy (Styl.)* (P), chap. 34.2.
[64] *L. Timothy (Styl.)* (S), chap. 45.3.
[65] Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) pl. 14.
[66] Personal observation by the author.
[67] See below, p. 373.
[68] For Strube (1993) 93 the "mehr als wahrscheinliche" option.
[69] Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 124.

a: Musrasras [19]: shaft with niche
(source: Callot and Gatier (2004) 596, fig. 9).

b: Qaṣr Brād [34], looking north-west: stylite column?
(photo: the author, 2002).

Fig. 5 Pillar shafts.

a: Looking west: top column drum (with holes, to fix struts?), shaft and rotary kernel crusher (photo: the author, 2006).

b: Looking north-east: building debris piled up by recent Caterpillar work (photo: the author, 2006).

Fig. 6 The pillar at Androna: a martyrium at risk [42].

However, the picture is unclear, and Symeon's *Life* informs us that at Telneshē the niche which accommodated the Eucharist was actually set against a wall.[70]

The Platform

Unlike the bases and the shafts, the platforms, i.e. the dwelling places of the pillar ascetics, have always attracted the curiosity of archaeologists.[71] What were they made of? Were they made of wood (as there are no remains) rather than stone? As to their shape, should we assume simple and horizontal floors, or capital-shaped platforms, as the *Life* of Luke[72] and many later stylite representations, mostly icons, suggest (and for which, again, there is no archaeological parallel)?[73] While there is unlikely to be a simple explanation, the studies of several shafts by Peña, Castellana, Djobadze and Callot[74] provide some grounds for the reconstruction of the probable, 'simple' design of some platforms in Syria. These shafts—at aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, on Jabal Srīr, west of the North-West Monastery at Dayr Simʿān, and Kīmār—seem to have supported two (or more) beams upon which a horizontal floor,

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[70] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chaps. 98–99. In two recent articles, Ashbrook-Harvey (1998) and (2006A) has again brought to our attention the fact that—alongside other forms of collective ritual practice—it was the stylite's pronounced participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, namely "the intersection of ascetic discipline, devotional piety, and liturgical community" (Ashbrook-Harvey (2006B) 8) which marked the daily routine at the *martyria* of the two Symeons. Similarly, in Constantinople: *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 43 and 96, and the representation, now in a private collection, of Symeon the Younger celebrating the Eucharist (Leroy (1962) pl. III, 2). However, opposition to such practice is also attested by some later episcopal authorities: Jacob, bishop of Edessa in the 680s, stipulated for his see that 'it is not lawful for the stylites to celebrate (offer) the Eucharist on their columns' (*Canon* 2) and 'it is not lawful that the sacred body shall be placed near the stylites on the column (in a niche?), if there is someone to offer to them the Eucharist' (*Canon* 4, ed. and transl. Vööbus (1960) 93–96). Jacob, who had close contacts with the monasteries in the heartland of Syria, later (in A.D. 705) retired to Dayr Ṭell ʿAdē near Dānā, where Symeon the Elder, our proto-stylite, had lived and 'experienced' his first pillar until 412. Obviously, as with any set of ecclesiastical canons, one must ask how widely Jacob's canons were actually disseminated and enforced. But these episcopal canons do show that even after the Arab Conquest these holy men on their pillars—and especially those celebrating or accommoding the Eucharist—could be perceived as a threat by the ecclesiastical authorities.

[71] E.g. Lassus (1947) 277–80, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 39–42.

[72] *L.Luke Styl.*, chap. 13.

[73] For a list of capital-style representations, depicting Symeon the Younger, see Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 65, n. 235. Similarly, a stylite on his column in an 11th c. manuscript (MS British Museum Add. 36636, fol. 48b): Dalton (1911) 463, fig. 274.

[74] See above, p. 344.

presumably wooden (or metallic, as on the Wondrous Mountain),[75] could be fixed. Struts, which were fixed into the holes on the outer side of these shafts, further enhanced the stability of the floors (Figs. 6a and 7a).

As there is no surviving archaeological evidence for these platforms, the size of their surfaces remains hypothetical. Though the texts allow some approximation, the numbers are to be taken with care: Evagrius, for example, relates that Symeon the Elder lived on a platform that measured scarcely two cubits (0.88 m) in circumference,[76] i.e. 0.28 m in diameter, a number that strongly suggests that Evagrius must have mistaken the diameter for the circumference (i.e. the *perimetron*) of the shaft. On the other hand, Evagrius' corrected diameter, namely 0.88 m, would seem more plausible, and though this figure is double the diameter suggested in *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chap. 46 (namely 1 cubit = 0.44 m), 0.88 m matches the diameters of many of the pillars found in northern Syria (see Table 1) and, above all, of the three drums of Symeon's pillar found by Krencker above Telneshē.[77]

Other texts, too, provide quantitative material. Lazarus' pillar at the Monastery of the Theotokos was 'three spans' wide,[78] and it does not come as a surprise to read that a distinguished ascetic, who visited the holy man on his pillar, found Lazarus' dwelling 'stifling and extremely confined'.[79] Similarly, the *Life* of Alypius speaks of a very limited platform area.[80] Yet some stylites—including Lazarus, Daniel, Symeon the Younger, Timothy and Luke—were able to welcome their visitors on the top of their pillars.[81] Mécérian, who studied the remains of the pillar of Symeon the Younger above Antioch, originally calculated a spacious platform of 9 sqm (i.e. 3 × 3 m), but his reconstruction has now proven mistaken. Djobadze calculated instead a small and round area of *ca.* 1.72 sqm.[82]

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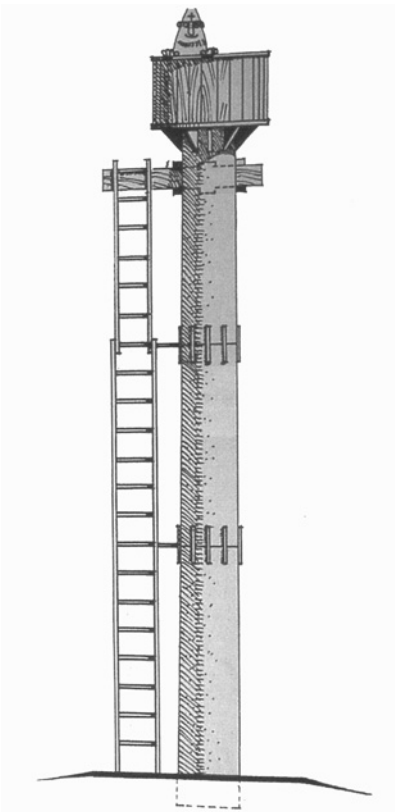
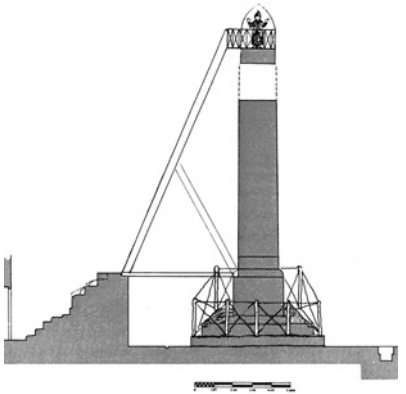
[75] *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chaps. 67, 94 and 113.
[76] Evagrius, *HE* 1.13, ed. Bidez and Parmentier (1898); transl. Whitby (2000).
[77] See above, n. 29.
[78] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 235.
[79] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 114.
[80] Delehaye (1962) lxxxiv.
[81] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 42–43; *L.Timothy (Styl.)* (P), chaps. 19.3 and 36.4; *L.Luke Styl.*, chaps. 31 and 63; *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 107 and 114. In contrast, see *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 95–96, where Daniel bade his visitors—both the brothers of the community and the archbishop of the imperial city—to stop on the ladder, halfway up to the platform.
[82] Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 65–66. On the other hand, Djobadze's 1.72 sqm seems unlikely to house the spatial arrangement described below.



a: Jabal Srīr [27] (source: Callot and Gatier (2004) 594, fig. 6).



b: Wondrous Mountain [45] (source: Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 62, fig. XXI).

Fig. 7 The ladder (reconstructions).

The *Life* of Symeon the Younger and Djobadze's revised reconstruction provide some further instructive details as to the layout of Symeon's platform. It used to be referred to as 'the cage' (*boutē*)[83] and seems to have been a sophisticated, metallic structure, whereas Symeon's original column had a walnut-wood frame. Probably, Symeon's 'cage' was cylindrical and terminated in a cone, which was covered with sheepskin. It also had 'windows', which could be opened and closed, and around the 'cage' there was an exterior balustrade. This balustrade enclosed a small area between the 'cage' and the ladder, and it was in this area where, on several occasions, physical contact with visitors took place.[84] Undoubtedly, this bi-partite division into an inner 'cage' and an outer platform was exceptional in Syria, but it may not have been unique. A similar design is visible on the bas-reliefs at Dēḥes and Qalbloze,[85] and may also have existed on Mount Galesion, where Lazarus' visitors climbed up the ladder and sat down on an (outer) platform in order to talk to the holy man, looking through a window into Lazarus' cell.[86] Features such as windows,[87] roofs[88] and 'constructed seats'[89] also occur elsewhere in the *Lives*.

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[83] Djobadze's reconstruction draws upon Symeon's *Life* and pictorial representations (above all, on the eulogy flasks). A similar arrangement of a *boutē* can be found on a bas-relief at Dēḥes, presumably 5th c., which shows Symeon's model and older namesake (see below, pp. 371–3). For the literature on these flasks see below, n. 153.

[84] Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 65–68, and *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chap. 134. This physical contact gained an even higher dimension through the extensive use of incense and the olfactory experience, a liturgical pattern exhibited both in the iconographic representation and in the hagiographical depiction of the saint (e.g. censers); see Elbern (1965) 281, fig. 1; 283, fig. 2; 289, fig. 7 (with the inscription 'ΠΡΟΣ Δ[Ε]Ξ[Α]Ι ΑΓΙΕ ΤΟ ΘΥΜΙΑΜΑ Κ[ΑΙ] ΠΙΑΝΤΑΣ Ι[Α]ΣΑΙ'; Bobbio, San Colombano); Ashbrook-Harvey (1999), and (2006B) 8 and 186–97. On censers (*thymiatēria*) and related liturgical instruments during that period see the references in Elbern (1965) 302, n. 56, and Strube (1982) 252 (= no. 235); on the so-called Kaper Koraon Treasure and related silver treasures from Syria, Mango (1986).

[85] See below, pp. 371–3.

[86] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 107 and 114. Other references to this window are *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 87, 88, 103–04, 114, 120 and 219 (providing the only access to the platform).

[87] *L.Timothy (Styl.)* (P), chaps. 21.2 and 30.1 ('it was his (i.e. Timothy's) custom, when he closed it, that no one was able to call out to him until he could open it').

[88] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 54 (a shelter of iron in the shape of a little enclosure, intended to protect the stylite from violent winds); *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chap. 31 (taken off in a later phase).

[89] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 17 and 35 (Lazarus adopted this custom from Palestine).

The Stylite Monastery

Wherever there was a stylite, there developed—at some point or another—a community or a monastery. While Symeon the Elder 'ideally' lived all his life as a stylite with only two attendant disciples,[90] the *Life* of Daniel marks, *expressis verbis*, a change: in Daniel's *Life* a large community of disciples surrounding his pillar, henceforth referred to as a 'stylite monastery', emerged for the first time. Later, when Daniel's community needed some degree of structure and organisation, Daniel appointed Sergius, another disciple of Symeon the Elder, as the superior of the community. Finally, between 471 and 474, Daniel's monastery received a guest-house and a martyr's chapel, in order to accommodate the relics of Symeon. Obviously, as has already been observed, the setting of Daniel's monastery near Constantinople was exceptional: the Anaplous project could draw upon imperial resources, which—out of an uncompromising loyalty to the more austere example of his master—Daniel initially refused.[91] Eventually, however, Daniel's objections—a hagiographic *topos* or the reality?—were in vain: Daniel's monastery was truly impressive, and its community flourished throughout the centuries. The literary accounts are equally impressive with regard to the monastic compounds at other *martyria*: Mārūn, Symeon 'of the Olives' and Luke at Eutropius were surrounded by considerable numbers of followers;[92] the anonymous stylite near Gethsemane [11] by 100 women; and Alypius by a male and a female monastery.[93] On Mount Galesion, too, the monastic community was considerable: Lazarus, we read, had to limit his community at the Saviour, his first

[90] E.g. *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chaps. 76 and 117. The emphasis on 'ideally' highlights the tension between the ascetic (and hagiographic) ideal of solitude and the need to cope with an increasingly demanding reality, namely to manage the ubiquitous crowds of devotees (*L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Theod.*, chap. 11: '…everyone arriving from every side and every road resembling a river, one can behold a sea of men standing together in that place, receiving rivers from every side'). With all these 'rivers' coming to seek help, advice and cures (on pilgrimage to the stylites and stylite *martyria* see further below), the presence of monastic attendants must be seen as a logistic necessity. At Telneshē it was particularly indispensable: "the whole church (clerical, civic and monastic) was necessarily involved in enabling the virtuoso to shine in ascetic glory" (Ashbrook-Harvey (2006A) 158).

[91] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chaps. 30 and 57.

[92] *L.Luke Styl.*, chap. 39.

[93] Delehaye (1962) lxxxiv. For other monasteries, i.e. entire communities 'of the Pillar', see below, n. 193.

pillar, to 12 brothers, and at the Theotokos, Lazarus' third pillar, 40 men surrounded the holy man.[94]

Despite the enormous number of stylite *martyria* listed in the gazetteer at the end of this paper, the archaeology of these establishments and, above all, of the communal structures ('stylite monasteries') and facilities for pilgrims at these sites remains largely unexplored. Obviously, Qalʿat Simʿān, the site of Symeon the Elder, is not only the most breathtaking but also the best-studied *martyrium*, but one must always keep in mind that the structures visible today were built after the death of the holy man. Consequently, they are not representative of the world of Symeon himself. By contrast, on the Wondrous Mountain, much of the *martyrium* of Symeon's namesake appears to have been completed in 551, when Symeon the Younger still had some 41 years to endure on his pillar and lived in the centre of a growing community. Compared to the other *martyria*, however, the state of archaeological research at Qalʿat Simʿān and on the Wondrous Mountain must be described as highly exceptional.

To find out more about the 'average' monastery surrounding a stylite pillar, one again has to turn to the evidence from Syria and Mesopotamia. At Ḥabsenus in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, the monastic structures form an enclosure around the pillar and create a rectangular court (Fig. 3b),[95] and a similar arrangement was observed and reconstructed by Tchalenko at Kafr Daryān.[96] We also know from a list of subscriptions that Jōnān, the stylite at Kafr Daryān, was not only a pillar ascetic, but also the leader of a monastic community.[97] Other communal structures, parts of these stylite monasteries, have been identified in various locations more recently: at Musrasras, Khirbat as-Sarj, Dayr al-Malik

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[94] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 246, 58 and 61. The true numbers of brothers could well have been higher than 12 and 40 respectively, which is discussed in Greenfield (2000) 34, n. 188.

[95] Apart from its pillar, the monastery at Ḥabsenus has not been studied at all. The evidence for the use of these structures (e.g. graffiti) reaches up to the 20th c.; see Anschütz (1984) 91 and Bell and Mango (1982) pl. 115 (= http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/, photo S_006).

[96] See above, pp. 339–40. At Kafr Daryān, the building housing the platform (with a huge subterranean cistern) has suffered severe dilapidation during the second half of the 20th c.

[97] Caquot (1958) 70–71 (I, 22). The same situation of a stylite directing a monastic community (and often descending from his column to do so) can be observed at gazetteer, nos. [1], [9], [44], [60] and above all [62].

(Fig. 8a), aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa and Dēr Stūnē. To erect the pillars and monasteries on Jabal Srīr and Jabal Shaykh Barakāt the masons had to clear and reuse—in a highly symbolic manner—the remains of two temples, pagan *temenoi*. At Androna, further work on the communal structures near the stylite pillar remains a serious *desideratum*, as despite ongoing ploughing and the very limited survey area, some buildings of these structures may still be identified. However, during my last visit to the site in 2006, earth-moving vehicles had already started to encroach up to a few metres from the column base (Fig. 6b). Finally, further research may also show whether it is legitimate to identify Michael the Syrian's famous Monastery of the Column [59] on the Euphrates with the one at Ṭall Bīʾa near ar-Raqqa, ancient Callinicum, where an impressive *coenobium* is currently being excavated by a German team.[98] Stylites had been active in that region from, at the latest, the reign of Justin I.[99]

As to the 'typology' of these monasteries, one notices, above all in Syria, the frequent occurrence of a tripartite architectural pattern, namely the combination of pillar, enclosure and tomb(s). Such enclosures (and/or their gates), which obviously also characterise many non-stylite monastic complexes, can still be found, for example, at Musrasras, Dayr al-Malik, Kafr Daryān (Fig. 3a), on Jabal Srīr and on the Wondrous Mountain near Antioch (Fig. 9b). Enclosures also feature prominently in the *Lives* of the stylites of Syria and beyond.[100] Symeon the Elder, to quote the earliest example, built for himself 'two enclosures of unmortared stone, and put a door to the inner enclosure'. This construction had taken place before Symeon climbed his second pillar. The actual appearance of this early arrangement, however, remains unclear.[101]

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[98] *Chron. Michael*, book XI, chap. 5, and book XII, chap. 7; Krebernik (1991) 51–52.

[99] E.g. gazetteer nos. [57] and [58], and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 69.

[100] E.g. *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chaps. 101, 107, 113, 144, 213 and 219 (though these references may also refer to the interior walls; see Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 90); *L.Abraham/Mārūn*; *Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 129 (Petra); *L.Timothy (Styl.) (P)*, chaps. 7.2 and 30.1. On the other hand, Lazarus' foundations on Mount Galesion were apparently unwalled (only an entrance marked the compounds): *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 142, 144, 207 and 243. For the connection between the pillar and an enclosure in the textual evidence (*egkleistērios stylos*) see above, p. 332.

[101] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Ant.*, chap. 12. Festugière (1959) 497, n. 1 suggests that there were—on analogy with the spatial division on the platform on the Wondrous Mountain?—an 'inner' (a sort of vestibule) and an 'outer' enclosure near Telneshē. Note that Symeon's enclosure, which also occurs in other contexts, was later pulled down (*L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chaps. 52 and 76).

a: Dayr al-Malik [21], looking north: the pillar base is visible on the left (photo: the author, 2002).

b: Dayr Bābisqā A [25], looking south-west: in the centre, sarcophagus lid (photo: the author, 2002).

Fig. 8 Monastic compounds.

As to the tomb of the first stylite, this too was—like Symeon's life and death—highly exceptional. When, in 459, Symeon died after 47 years atop his pillar above Telneshē, his mortal remains were taken down and transferred, in an ostentatious procession, to Antioch, the capital of the province of Syria I. The sources even provide the date for their arrival: Friday, 25 September.[102] However, Symeon's relics were soon to be transferred further to Constantinople, the Byzantine capital. There, at Anaplous near Constantinople, Symeon was laid to rest at the pillar of his former disciple, Daniel.[103] With this removal of Symeon, the *sanctus sanctorum*, away from his homeland in Oriens, the supreme worldly and spiritual powers were brought together near to the imperial court. Several scholars have rightly noticed the unexpected readiness of the church of Antioch to surrender their holy man and patron to the imperial capital.[104] It would be entirely conceivable that the imperial patronage towards Symeon's pillar after the death of the stylite, i.e. towards the construction of his later, splendid *martyrium*, could have been part of a deal: Qalʿat Simʿān would have been the emperor's costly compensation for the transfer of Symeon's relics.[105]

The mortal remains of other stylites may not have travelled as far as Constantinople, and there are good archaeological grounds to suggest that many ascetics were actually buried close to their pillars on which they had stood through the years. Again, the *martyrium* of Jōnān, one of the best documented, exemplifies this situation: at Kafr Daryān, a sarcophagus-tomb[106] can still be found north of the pillar, between the base of the column and the enclosure wall (Fig. 3a). Tombs of the deceased stylites are also attested at some other *martyria*. On Jabal Shaykh Barakāt there is still a funerary niche, a lid with *acroteria*, and another reliquary. At Dayr Bābisqā A in Jabal Barīshā—a potential site of a stylite, presumably of Mār Gabrā [25]—the arrangement may have been similar: again, we find a sarcophagus with a Syriac inscription and a lid (Fig. 8b), and pilgrims' graffiti on various walls.

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[102] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chap. 126.

[103] On Daniel's monastery and the martyr's chapel to accommodate the remains of his master, see above, p. 354.

[104] On Antioch's initial refusal to do so, see *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chap. 128, where the *Life* ends.

[105] So, e.g., Lane Fox (1997) 193. On the *martyrium* and its date of construction, see below, p. 360.

[106] Another, unidentified tomb is situated to the east of the building with the 'visitors' platform'.

At Androna in Syria, on the other hand, the situation is more obscure, but a reliquary found in Umm al-Jurūn, a neighbouring village, may be related to the pillar *martyrium*, which was situated some 300 m to the north of the city walls.[107] Finally, the *Life* of Daniel relates that Daniel was buried close to the pillar on which he had stood. Thus, from 493 onwards Symeon the Elder and Daniel, master and disciple, rested united in their tombs on the Bosphorus.[108]

The *martyria* of the two Symeons—Qalʿat Simʿān and the Wondrous Mountain, which will be discussed further below—were not only the two most spectacular stylite *martyria*, but also the most impressive representatives of the model 'stylite monastery'. Accordingly—and as these sites were also crowded pilgrimage centres—they had huge and lavishly decorated churches and oratories. The situation is different at the smaller *martyria*, where the character of these units is far less clear. While some sort of oratories are attested at a number of *martyria* (e.g. at Musrasras (?), Khirbat as-Sarj (?), Kafr Daryān (?), Dayr Bābisqā A, Jabal Srīr, Jabal Shaykh Barakāt, Qaṣr Brād [34] and Kīmār), at others the evidence is less conclusive (e.g. aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, Androna). As at Qalʿat Simʿān, some oratories may only have been erected for the posthumous veneration and commemoration of the holy man, and there is absolutely no evidence in the *Lives* of Symeon the proto-stylite that any such structure had existed during his lifetime. In the texts, oratories only occur as from the *Life* of Daniel onwards.[109]

As the texts tend to omit all other structures that constitute 'monasteries', such as the dwelling complexes and guesthouses, here again we must turn to archaeology. In Syria any survey of the evidence quickly confirms that the prospect is indeed promising, for some sort of communal structures can still be identified at nearly all stylite *martyria*. On the other hand, however, as there are no systematic studies or documented stratigraphy, the precise function of these structures is in most cases impossible to identify. Nevertheless, the enormous functional range of affiliated structures constituting a stylite monastery is evident from the *Lives* of Symeon the Younger, Symeon of the Olives in Mesopotamia, and of Abraham and Mārūn, both stylites (and a

[107] See Mango (2005) 335 and figs. 2, 6.
[108] *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 92.
[109] E.g. *L.Daniel Styl.*, chap. 57; *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 33 (St. Mina), 42 (The Saviour), 86, 118, 160, 225, 249 and 252 (Resurrection).

dendrite) in Ingilene.[110] The latter two accounts provide particularly detailed insights into the communal character and the life of 'minor' *martyria* during the 6th and 7th c., while the *Life* of Abraham and Mārūn also repeatedly emphasises their philanthropic vocation, their charity to the poor, and their generous hospitality.

The Archaeological 'Best Case Scenarios': Qalʿat Simʿān and the Wondrous Mountain

Stylitism started in northern Syria, and for a long time it remained a predominantly Syrian and Syro-Mesopotamian phenomenon. Not surprisingly, the most impressive site for the modern visitor to experience the world of the stylites today is Symeon the Elder's posthumous *martyrium* at Qalʿat Simʿān. As discussed earlier, the first impression of that basilical complex is slightly misleading, as nothing of what is now extant existed in the stylite's lifetime during the first half of the 5th c. Rather, the lavish complex was built after 470[111] or, more precisely (and more convincingly), between 476 and 491/2 (i.e. during the reign of the emperor Zeno).[112] Scholarly interest in the complex dates back to the late-19th c.,[113] and lately a series of publications (*Mission française de Qalʿat Semʿan*, 2003–) directed by J.-P. Sodini have begun to appear.[114] Symeon's posthumous *martyrium* was built around the site of his pillar on the spectacular promontory that overlooks the plain of Qaṭūra, Jabal Shaykh Barakāt—which was the greatest pagan sanctuary in northern Syria until the 5th c.—and the then-growing village of Telneshē (Telanissos in the Greek sources, present-day Dayr Simʿān). The enormous complex included, amongst other structures, a cruciform basilical church (with an octagon surrounding Symeon's pillar), an esplanade, an impressive octagonal baptistery, a triumphal arch, a gate-house, guest-houses and a L-shaped porticoed building

[110] *L.Symeon Olives* and *L.Abraham/Mārūn.* Abraham spent 38 years on his pillar, Mārūn 29. Before climbing the pillar, Mārūn had lived in a tree for 11 years.

[111] So Lane Fox (1997) 194–95.

[112] Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 226–34, and later Strube (1993) 205.

[113] E.g. De Vogüé (1865–1877) vol. 1, 141–54, and vol. 2, pl. 139–51; Butler (1920) 281–84; Krencker (1939); Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 223–76; and Strube (1993) 205–52. For a summary of the history of research into the *martyrium*, see Biscop (2005).

[114] See also Sodini (2001).

for the monastic community (Fig. 9a). The rapid development of Telneshē, the village situated just below the stylite *martyrium*, is intrinsically linked to the flood of pilgrims to Symeon's pillar both before and after his death in 459. By 479, 20 years after the death of the stylite, Telneshē could boast an impressive—its first?—*pandocheion*[115] and three monasteries, situated north-west (this monastery had its own pillar [32]), south-west and south-east of the village, which offered enormous facilities for pilgrim accommodation and flourished during the following century (Figs. 11a and 12),[116] The archaeological evidence thus represents the status of Telneshē and the *martyrium* during the late 5th (i.e. post-459)[117] and 6th c., together with the medieval modifications which inspired the name of Qalʿat Simʿān, i.e. 'the castle/fortress of Symeon'. During the time of the Islamic Conquest, the Arabs took prisoner some of the pilgrims who were on their way to Symeon's pillar, but they seem to have spared the *martyrium*.[118]

The other archaeological 'best case scenario' is the site of Symeon the Younger (d. 592), situated on the Wondrous Mountain, an isolated and barren hill between Antioch and the Mediterranean. This monastery, partly carved from the living rock, consisted of a rectangular enclosure, three churches and related structures, which were all arranged around Symeon's pillar in the central octagon (Figs. 9b and 2d). Furthermore, the monastery had a baptistery, several hospices and—not attested elsewhere—a bath-house (*loutron*), and although, all in all, it was smaller than the posthumous *martyrium* at Qalʿat Simʿān, there are many conceptual parallels (e.g. the octagonal form). The *Life* of Symeon the Younger is also instructive as to the process of constructing the monastery and mentions, among others, the pilgrims who had come from as far as Isauria and, having been cured by the word of the stylite, laboured and quarried the stones. These workers were directed by Symeon himself, who also ensured their efficiency: thus the octagon and the pillar (*megas stylos*), the very heart of the monastery, were completed after only 10 years of labour, in 551.[119] Surrounding the monastery, there is also evidence of rain-water catchment (11 cisterns) and of terracing on the slopes (Fig. 10b).

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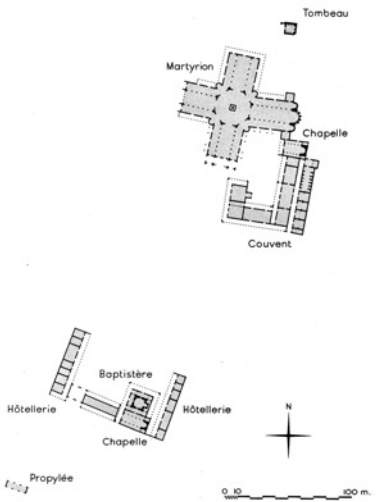
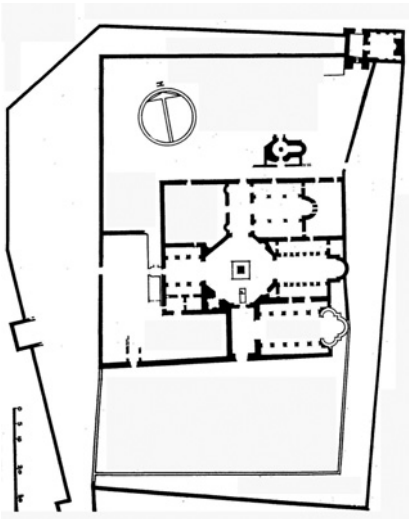
[115] Butler (1920) 278–80, and ill. 298, and Prentice (1922) no. 1154.
[116] See also Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 205–22.
[117] Symeon's earliest *Life* (MS Vatican 160) dates to *ca.* 473.
[118] Vööbus (1958–1988) vol. 3, 310.
[119] *L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chaps. 96, 172, 192, 113, and above.



a: Qalʿat Simʿān [31]: reconstruction, *ca.* A.D. 500 (source: Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 2, pl. LXXXIII).



b: Wondrous Mountain [45]: sketch plan, 6th–7th c. (after Mécérian) (source: Lassus (1947) 134, fig. 55).

Fig. 9 Monastic compounds.

The Economy of the Stylite

Like the stylite monastery, the economic role of the stylite, which is tangible in the remains surrounding the pillars, has not yet been assessed systematically. Nonetheless, while the texts tend to be silent on economic issues,[120] the archaeological data, scarce as it is, strongly suggests that this silence could again be a *topos* rather than a faithful description of reality. The archaeological evidence for monastic production is instructive, and presses, which were the characteristic element of the economy of the late antique Mediterranean, can still be found, *in situ*, at a respectable number of stylite monasteries: e.g. at Dayr al-Malik—with three presses, including one of the more 'industrial' 'roller-type'[121]—, at Ḥayr Abū ʿAmūd [22], aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, on Jabal Srīr and Jabal Shaykh Barakāt, and at Qaṣr Brād. The latter *martyrium*, of Qaṣr Brād, which overlooks a fertile *wādī* to its east and north-east, had earlier been classified as a "couvent comme exploitation agricole" by Tchalenko,[122] and as a "couvent isolé probablement au centre d'un domaine" by Tate.[123] Some of the "large rock-hewn vats in the immediate vicinity, and a number of huge cylindrical rollers", witnessed by Butler at the *martyrium* a century earlier,[124] are still *in situ* today (Fig. 10a).[125] All these cases demonstrate that the concept of pillar asceticism and agricultural enterprise were—at least in principle—not mutually opposed. The situation is similar at Androna, where a rotary kernel crusher, visible in Fig. 6a, belongs to the stylite *martyrium* (and not to an olive farm, as originally suggested by the excavators).[126] Other communities, too, were concerned with issues of economic autarchy, a concern which can still be witnessed in the cisterns and terraces on the Wondrous Mountain (Fig. 10b; though these

[120] For some evidence of 'exchange services' performed at the pillars see the summary of Ashbrook-Harvey (2006A) 159, n. 39.

[121] See Schachner (2005) 167–68, and figs. 4–5.

[122] Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 176.

[123] Tate (1992) 339, table 54.

[124] Butler (1920) 314–15.

[125] During my first visit to Qaṣr Brād in 2002 I also witnessed (at least) one more press of the 'lever-and-weights' or the 'lever-and-screw type' in the immediate surroundings of the monastery. I see no reason to agree with Castellana (1979) 210–12 that the installation shown in Fig. 10a would represent the remains of an ancient baptistery.

[126] See also Mango (2005) 337, figs. 7–8.

a: Qaṣr Brād [34], looking north-east: press (?) (photo: the author, 2002).

b: Wondrous Mountain [45]: terraced slopes north-west of the monastery (photo: the author, 2003).

Fig. 10 The economy.

could be of a later date), the stable and troughs at Dayr Bābisqā A,[127] and the fishpond in Luke's monastery.[128] With one exception, this evidence of agricultural installations is in full accordance with the general situation in other, non-stylite monasteries.[129] The 12,000 olive-trees at Symeon's Monastery of the Column near Nisibis in Mesopotamia evidently was truly exceptional.[130]

Manufacture, on the other hand, is almost entirely absent from the evidence for stylite sites, both textual and archaeological. If stylites and/or their attendant disciples did produce anything other than agricultural goods, the items produced with their hands would most likely have included pilgrim tokens and pilgrim flasks. A look at the texts may provide some basis for such an assumption: the Syriac *Lives* of Symeon the Elder are full of references to oil and to *ḥnānā* (a 'holy' mixture of dust, oil and water) with which Symeon performed his miracles, healed paralytics, chased away beasts, protected villages, reactivated springs, calmed the waves of the Mediterranean, and multiplied corn as far away as Osrhoene.[131] This *ḥnānā* was taken away by the pious in some sort of containers or eulogy flasks (on which the texts are again surprisingly silent). On the other hand, flasks or "pieces of portable, palpable sanctity"[132] have been found in a number of archaeological contexts, and many of these depict one of the two Symeons.[133] More recently, research on the iconography of these tokens, their inscriptions (including one in Syriac), their findspots and on the mineralogical composition of the clay has led to some important revision of earlier hypotheses as to their place of production by showing that most flasks depicting Symeon the Younger, who lived on the Wondrous Mountain, must actually have been produced elsewhere, namely in the vicinity of the *martyrium* of the elder Symeon at Qalʿat Simʿān.[134] Was there,

[127] Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 112, fig. 3 (units 'B' and 'D').
[128] *L.Luke Styl.*, chap. 38.
[129] See Schachner (2006), esp. 156–98.
[130] *L.Symeon Olives*, 144 (summary: 177).
[131] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (V), chaps. 34, 61, 63, 64, 71, 72 and 88; Doran (1992) 222. Similarly, the *konis* (*tēs autou eulogias*) in the *Life* of the younger Symeon (chaps. 163, 232, 235 and 255).
[132] So Vikan (1982) 13.
[133] See below, n. 153.
[134] Vikan (1994) 343, n. 14; Sodini (1995); Orssaud and Sodini (1997); and Gerard *et al.* (1997).

from the later 6th c., one central token factory for flasks depicting the two Symeons, rather than two (or more)? Still, even if these flasks were produced near the *martyrium* of Symeon the Elder, the monastic involvement in this process—if any—again remains obscure, and as the kilns have not yet been identified in the archaeological record, the involvement of the brothers serving the stylite *martyrium* in producing such items (including some amulets made of glass)[135] remains, at best, hypothetical.[136] Similar questions could be addressed elsewhere: on Mount Galesion, Lazarus apparently had tokens at hand to give to visitors, and probably also gave coins to the poor.[137] Another curious account by John Phokas relates that a Georgian monk, who lived on or in an *egkleistērios stylos* near Jericho during the 12th c., manufactured cross-shaped eulogies out of local wood.[138] In the Near East, this practice of making objects of wood from holy places continues to the present day.

Pilgrimage

The *Lives* of the stylites spill over with references to the faithful and "extroverted mystics"[139] who visited the holy men and followed their example. Others who visited these stylites simply satisfied the 'thrill' of tourism (as many would do today) and the allure of 'bizarrely sacred' places and monuments.[140] As the stylites were "literally in the world yet not of it"[141]—a situation that was not only unavoidable, but most likely intentional—the repeated attempts to heighten their pillars should be seen as a way to deal with this reality. The true downside of pilgrimage, however, was to turn the 'desert' into a 'city', and to

[135] Fernandez (1975) 193 and 194, fig. 45.

[136] A similar situation can be found at Abū Mīnā in the Mareotis, where the location of and the involvement of the monastic community (Kaufmann's *coenobium*) in the production of flasks ('*eulogiae* factory') remains unexplained (Kaufmann (1921) 151–66 and 201). See also the article by S. Bangert in the present volume (pp. 293–327).

[137] *L.Lazaros (Styl.)*, chaps. 75, 113 and 145.

[138] See Delehaye (1962) cxxxii.

[139] So Turner and Turner (1978) 33.

[140] For the motivations of pilgrims, in general, see Mango (1995); on the motives for visiting a stylite: Brown (1971), and for visiting Lazarus: Greenfield (2002) 220–31.

[141] See above, p. 330.

bring confusion and noise to the solitude of the holy men. One can easily imagine the folk camping and cooking in the surroundings of Symeon's pillar, and the noise of the camels and pack animals, while pilgrimage to Telneshē, from as far as from Arabia, Armenia and Persia,[142] continued throughout the year.[143]

On principle, the archaeology of pilgrimage to the stylites should still be tangible in the *xenodocheia* and *pandocheia*, the arches marking the *temenoi* of the *martyria* (Figs. 11b and 11a: '*arc triomphal*'), the baptisteries, graffiti, pilgrim flasks and the rows of possible shops for souvenirs.[144] With the exception of the two best studied and documented *martyria* of the two Symeons, however, study of stylite pilgrimage has once again been limited. Consequently, tracing pilgrimage at the 'minor' *martyria* is even more problematic, and—in the absence of epigraphic records—only in a very few cases can guest-houses, for which there are no comparative studies nor an established typology, be identified.[145] Moreover, as many of the *stylite* martyria in Syria were situated at the crossroads of Roman highways, one should also consider that many pilgrims could and did make use of the excellent civic rather than ecclesiastic or monastic infrastructure along the Late Roman roads. In northern Syria and in the surroundings of Dānā, the main theatre of stylitism from the 5th c. onwards, civic guest-houses were by no means a rarity (Fig. 12).[146] Some guest-houses in this region could well have been erected principally for the use of the pilgrims on their way to and from Qalʿat Simʿān, such as Butler and Prentice's *pandocheion* (A.D. 479),[147] the 'Great Pandocheion',[148] and the oblong guest-house (A.D.

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[142] *L.Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr.* (BL), chaps. 56, 67, 68, 70 and 72.

[143] See also Trombley (1993) vol. 2, 187.

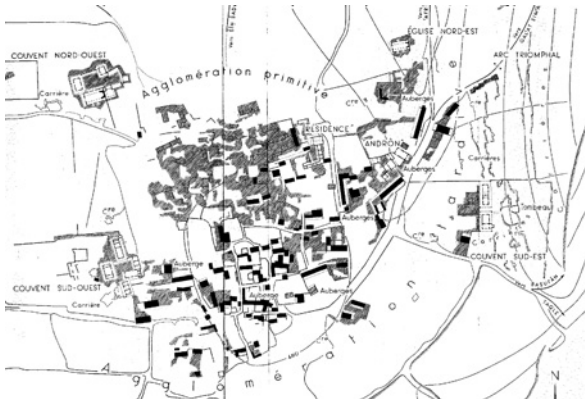
[144] So at Dayr Simʿān, south-west of the '*arc triomphal*' and in the vicinity of Tchalenko's '*andrōn*'? See Butler (1920) opposite p. 265.

[145] Accordingly, Peña's designation of '*hospices*' (e.g. at Khirbat as-Sarj, Dayr al-Malik) must be considered for the most part hypothetical.

[146] E.g. at Brād, indicated in the topographical map by Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 1, 5, fig. 7; Kafr Nābū, *ibid.*, 81, fig. 143; Bābisqā, *ibid.*, 167, fig. 280; Dār Qūtā, *ibid.*, 178, fig. 299; Baʿūda, *ibid.*, 187, fig. 313; Jerāde, *ibid.*, 296, fig. 481. Descriptions of these guest-houses are given in Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 21–25.

[147] On Dayr Simʿan (Telneshē), its *pandocheion* and monasteries, see above, pp. 360–1.

[148] Butler (1920) 275–78, and ills. 296–97. Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 216–18 has convincingly shown that Butler's 'Great Pandocheion' was in fact a monastery (the so-called South-East Monastery, visible in Fig. 11a). Thus, the building may have served both pilgrims and a monastic community.



a: Schematic map of the surviving remains (source: Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 2, pl. CCVIII).

b: Via sacra: 'arc triomphal' (photo: M. Schachner, 2005).

Fig. 11 Pilgrimage: Dayr Simʿān (ancient Telneshē).

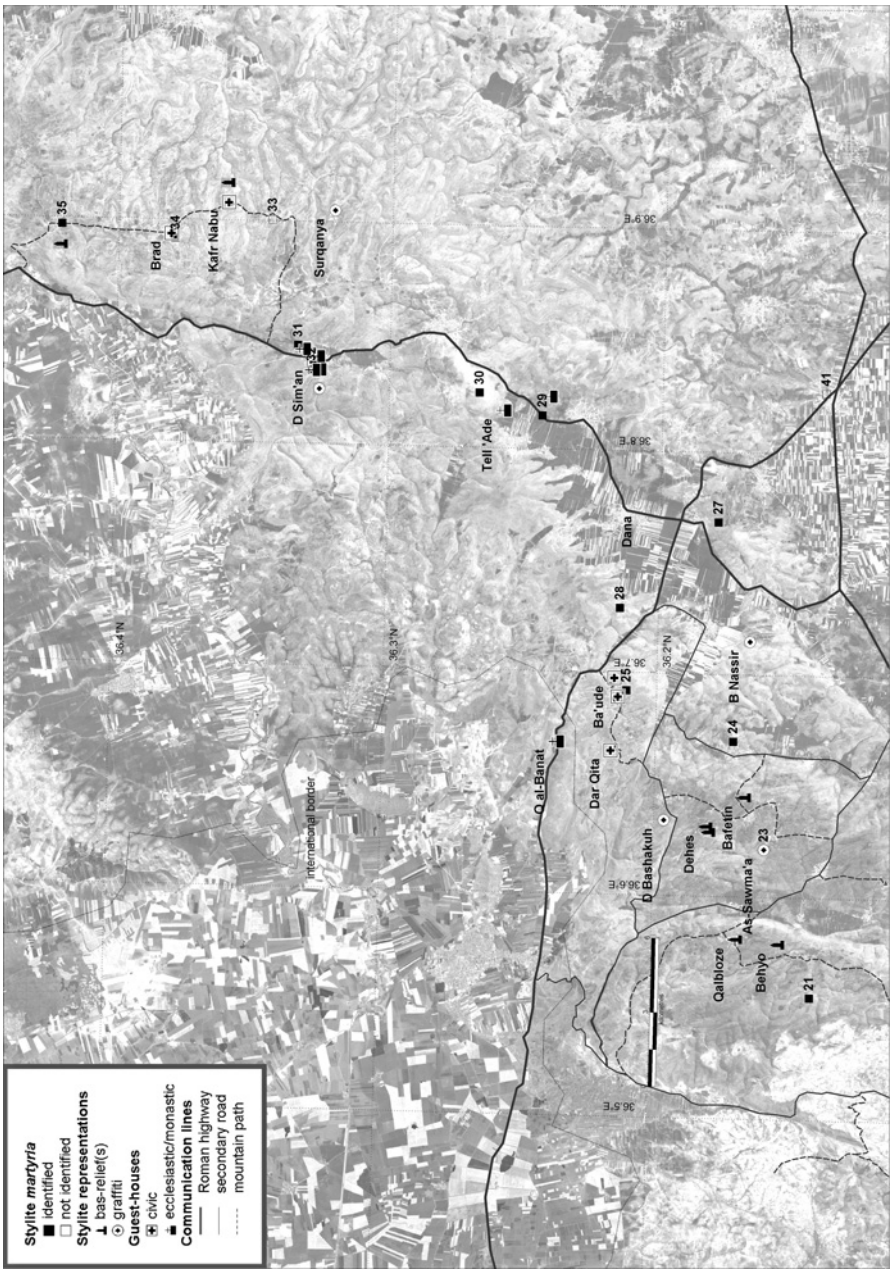


Fig. 12 The North Syrian Limestone Massif: stylite martyria, stylite representations, guest houses and communication lines.

504/5) west of Kafr Nābū.[149] Other guest-houses, large churches and monasteries situated in similarly strategic locations may only partly be explained by the 'pilgrimage boom' to the *martyrium* of Symeon. Such could have been the case with the guest-houses at Bābisqā, Dār Qīṭā,[150] and the impressive monastery of Qaṣr al-Banāt.[151] The architecture of Qaṣr al-Banāt, which still awaits further investigation, suggests enormous capacity for accommodation during the 5th (?) and the 6th c. Its church, on the other hand, had already been built at an earlier period, shortly after 418 by the wandering architect Kyrios (Markianos),[152] at a time when Symeon had only just moved to his first pillar near Telneshē at the beginning of his stylite career.

Stylite Representations (other than Eulogies)[153]

Pilgrimage to the stylites closes the thematic gap between the pillar ascetics and one genre of iconographic representations which has been sadly neglected by archaeologists: the graffiti. Being immediate in their expression, graffiti and graffito representations not only have an iconographic value, but they open a window into the soul and imagination

[149] Butler (1920) 297–99, and ill. 328.

[150] Butler (1920) 175–76 (Bābisqā) and 188–89 (Dār Qīṭā, A.D. 436). In both cases the guest-houses have been identified on the basis of their location and architectural form (oblong buildings, double-storeyed and porticoed courtyards respectively). Bābisqā also had public baths (*ibid.*, 170–75), a 'bazaar' (*ibid.*, 176, and ill. 184) and, presumably, a stylite (Mār Gabrā [25], see gazetteer), situated some 500 m south/south-east of the village core. A representation of Mār Gabrā (?) could be shown in Lassus (1947) pl. LVII, 2.

[151] Butler (1920) 214–23, and ill. 218.

[152] Prentice (1908) no. 76, and Tchalenko (1990) 133.

[153] Given the excellent literature on this topic, the eulogies depicting one of the Symeons (or other stylites) will not be discussed further here. For a survey of the existing literature see Lassus (1947) 287–88; Elbern (1965) 287–91; Nasrallah (1971) 349, n. 11; Fernandez (1975) 175–79; Drijvers (1977) 69–71; Vikan (1984) 67–74; Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 66, n. 243; Sodini (1989) and (1993A); Peña (2000) 263–66; Callot (2005); Rautman (2005), and above, nn. 132–34; setting these tokens into context, Frank (2006). On the snake that coils itself around Symeon's pillar (and may symbolise the tree of life), see Elbern (1965) 294–96, and Drijvers (1977) 65 and 72. Two unique representations of this motif—one in basalt and one on metal, the latter dating to the 6th or 7th c.—are preserved in the Musée du Louvre, Paris. The first was found near Sidon (Coche de la Ferté (1961) 75–77, and Elbern (1965) 283, fig. 2, and 296), the other near Maʿarrat an-Nuʿmān in Syria (Lassus (1960), and Mango (1986) 240–41 (= no. 71)).

of their authors, ordinary people not always represented in our literary texts. Though the systematic study of the stylite graffiti is only in its infancy,[154] some observations can already be made. In the North Syrian graffiti, pillar ascetics are shown in a wide range of variations, and stylites seem to have played a dominant role in the overall graffito repertoire. Obviously, as to the reading of these graffito representations, many questions must still be addressed: who are the figures depicted, who were their authors, and what was their provenance? But the iconographic *signifiant* of these pillar ascetics, their abstraction and stylisation can very roughly be summarised as follows the stylite and his pillar appear in all kinds of loose combinations of a column base (though these bases seem optional), a shaft (mostly represented by a simple line), and a triangle (sometimes inverted, symbolising the platform) or a cross-beam (or the combination of a triangle and a cross-beam) (Fig. 13a–c). As on the steles, bas-reliefs and some of the later flasks (particularly those showing Symeon the Younger), the figure of the stylite has been reduced to the absolute minimum or been entirely omitted: *pars pro toto*, in these cases the column—a 'generic design' that suggests an "'archetypal' anthropoid pillar"[155]—seems to stand for the holy man.

Stylites also occur on a number of steles and bas-reliefs, all of which are of a Syrian origin. These representations, which range from the "'archetypal' anthropoid pillar" to rather realistic representations of the *martyrium* of Symeon, have been identified in a number of stylite and non-stylite environments: on churches and church facades,[156] buildings related to pilgrimage (baptisteries, guest-houses, etc.)[157] and

[154] E.g. Fernandez (1975) 193–94; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1980) 409, fig. 96; 412, fig. 107; 413, fig. 111; 415, fig. 119; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 247, fig. 47; 248, fig. 48; 259, fig. 69; 264, fig. 77; Fernandez (1985) 130–51; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1987) 42, fig. 21; 69, fig. 59; 178, fig. 172, and Sodini (1989) 30–31, fig. 2. Two decades earlier, these graffiti—and above all those in the surroundings of Symeon's pillar—were "tous inédits" (Seyrig (1958) 18, n. 3).

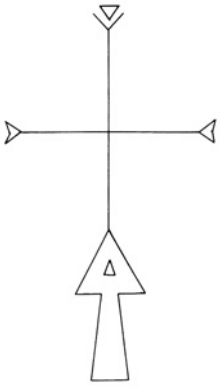
[155] Frankfurter (1990) 186.

[156] Five or six bas-reliefs, some of which could have come from a liturgical context (e.g. from a chancel screen), have found their way into Oriental and European collections (Damascus, Paris, Berlin). For a comparative, iconographic study of these monuments, which focuses on the relief depicting Symeon the Elder now in the Staatlichen Museen in Berlin, see Elbern (1965). Another bas-relief, not listed by Elbern and found in the Syrian Hauran, is recorded by Strube (1982) 243 (= no. 223).

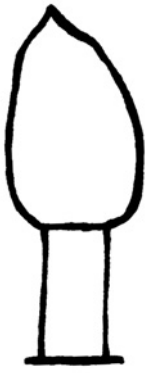
[157] Including stables and other buildings for animals, such as at Kīmār and Kafr Nābū; see Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) pls. 44 and 45.

a: Dayr Bāshakūḥ (Jabal Barīshā): stylite graffito on stable (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 264, fig. 77).

b: Aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa [23] (Jabal Barīshā): graffito on bottom pillar drum (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 248, fig. 48).



c: Burj Nassir (Jabal Barīshā): stylite graffito (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1980) 415, fig. 119).



d: Surqānya (Jabal Simʿān): stylite (?) graffito (source: Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1980) 412, fig. 107).

Fig. 13 Stylite representations: graffiti.

on reliquaries (Fig. 14d).[158] The reliefs on the southern facade of the East Church (*ca.* 471–80; Fig. 14a)[159] and on the West Church (6th c.) at Dēḥes[160] in Jabal Barīshā, and on the western facade and a pier of the church at Qalblōze (pre-A.D. 471; Fig. 14b)[161] in Jabal al-Aʿlā show the pillar of the ascetic (presumably Symeon the Elder), a niche and/or a window,[162] and a cross on top of the hood of the holy man. They also attest, as does other evidence, to the enormous radiation of the cult of the stylites throughout Syria, beyond Telneshē and the plain of Dānā. In some places the evidence is particularly intriguing, such as at Dēḥes where—though there is no evidence of a stylite[163]—two exceptional stylite representations are still *in situ* and eight flasks showing a stylite have recently been unearthed.[164] Only two kilometres from Dēḥes, at Bāfetīn, we find, alongside some stylite graffiti,[165] another representation of a pillar ascetic on a chancel pier (Fig. 12).[166] This spatial concentration of stylite representations in northern Syria has rightly led Strube to ask whether the relics of Symeon the Elder

[158] See also Seyrig (1958) 16–19, and 58, figs. 8–9; Fernandez (1975) 179–99; Sodini (1989) 30; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1990) 49, fig. 2, and Callot (2005) 711.

[159] Lassus (1947) 279; Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 1, 206, fig. 342, and vol. 2, 75, fig. 209 (right); Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1980) 323–24; Tchalenko (1990) 137; and Strube (1993) 124. Another relief on the same facade of the building, reproduced in Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 2, 75, fig. 209 (left), shows the same or a second pillar (?) ascetic—traces of a shaft are entirely missing—in his cage or *boutē*. If the figure represented was truly a stylite, he would have been protected by a spherical cover suspended on colonettes, and from falling or being blown off his column by an elaborate screen.

[160] Strube (2002) 136, and pl. 98, d.

[161] Lassus (1947) 279, and pl. XLVI; Seyrig (1958) 59, figs. 13–15, and Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 2, 106, fig. 286.

[162] On the niche, see above, p. 347; on the window, see p. 353. The bas-relief at Qalbloze is particularly accurate in every detail: the pillar consists of a base, a square plinth, the shaft with a niche, another closed cage (?) with a window, and a cross on top. While there is no reference to a cage in the *Lives* of the elder Symeon (unlike in the *Life* of Symeon the Younger), as I have shown in the previous sections, the existence of niches, likely to fulfill a liturgical function, is attested from earliest times.

[163] The impressive monastery of Dēḥes (with a substantial tower), situated on the outskirts of the village, has been studied by Biscop *et al.* (1997). On the walls various graffiti can still be found. For 'stylites' in towers see below.

[164] Callot (2005).

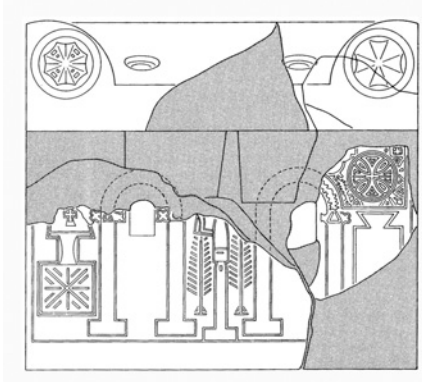
[165] Fernandez (1975) 194, fig. 46.

[166] Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 1, 223, fig. 368 (right). Was there another, unidentified stylite at Bāfetīn?

a: Dēḥes (Jabal Barīshā), East Church (5th c.): southern façade (photo: the author, 2002).

b: Qalblōze (5th c., Jabal al-Aʿlā): western facade (source: University of Heidelberg, Institut für Byzantinische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte, inventory no. Rel 2192 (by courtesy of C. Strube).

c: Jibrīn (near Aleppo): basalt stele depicting the elder Symeon, A.D. 492/3 (source: Elbern (1965) 283, fig. 3).



d: Beḥyō (5th c., Jabal al-Aʿlā): stylite representation on martyrium reliquary (source: Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 1, 249, fig. 410 (below)).

Fig. 14 Stylite representations: bas-reliefs.

(whether genuine if available in the Massif after 459, or fake)[167] or simply the desire to venerate Symeon could be seen as the very *raison d'être* for some of the magnificent churches built in that region in the second half of the 5th c. (e.g. at Qalblōze; Bettir, A.D. 471; Khirbat al-Khatūb, A.D. 473/4).[168]

Further east, at Rasm an-Nafal in Jabal Ḥāṣṣ, a Greek inscription mentions a certain Symeon and shows a pillar in bas-relief.[169] Another stele, made in basalt and found at Jibrīn[170] near Aleppo (nowadays in the Musée du Louvre, Paris), dates to 492/3, shortly after the completion of Symeon's posthumous *martyrium* at Qalʿat Simʿān; there, the Greek inscription leaves no doubt as to the identity of its stylite: *hagios Symeōnēs*, i.e. Saint Symeon (Fig. 14c).[171]

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[167] On Symeon's mortal remains being taken to Antioch and on to Constantinople, see above, p. 358.

[168] Strube (1993) 93; 124, n. 826, and (1996) 61–71; similarly, Tchalenko (1990) 137.

[169] *IGLS II*, no. 278; Fernandez (1975) 187–88 and fig. 39, and Fernandez (1985) 122–23, fig. 123 and pl. II, fig. 5. Jalabert and Mouterde's reading is different (the two had not identified the pillar as a Christian *stylos*): + Συμεώνης Ἀνέου μν(η)σθ(ῆ), in which a certain Symeon son of Aneos (the Semitic Ḥannay)—the donor of the stele and a man well known in that region (he might also occur in *IGLS II*, no. 275)—"a probablement fait graver sur son offrande le symbole de son patron" (Seyrig (1958) 18, and fig. 19). As to the findspot of the stele, Rasm an-Nafal, Musil (1928) 198–99 and 206, mentions a hamlet called Umm ʿAmūd, i.e. 'Mother of (the) Column' situated in the surroundings of Rasm an-Nafal and on the north-eastern slopes of Jabal Ḥāṣṣ. Another, homonymous hamlet was situated further west, not far from Dayr aṣ-Ṣalīb(a) or (Syriac) Dayrā da-Ṣlībā, the (unidentified) 'Monastery (?) of the Cross' (*ibid.*, 207).

[170] Ronzevalle, who copied and photograped the stele's inscription, places Jibrīn "à 6 km environ à l'E.-S.-E. d'Alep" (Jalabert and Mouterde (1929) 134). A modern settlement called Jibrīn is situated north-east of Jabal Simʿān, *ca.* 8 km south-east of Aʿzāz.

[171] *IGLS I*, no. 256 (inscr. B). For a comprehensive bibliography on the stele and its acquisition see Coche de la Ferté (1958) 87, and Elbern (1965) 284–85. The objections to its identification raised by Perdrizet (1933) 287–89 and the following *addendum* in Jalabert and Mouterde (1939) 381 can now be considered superseded. Note that both the Syriacised form of Symeon (Syriac Shemʿūn) and the use of the era of the Martyrs hint at a local, essentially Syriac background of the likely donor: Abraamis Azizon, and/or of the stonemasons. One such Abraham (d. *ca.* 420s), a missionary ascetic from Cyrrhus, is mentioned in Theod. *Hist. Mon. Syr.* chap. 17 (ed. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen (1977) vol. 2, 34–51; transl. Doran (1992) 120–25), which would make the stele one of the earliest depictions of Symeon. As in the previous case the raw material for the stele must have been brought from an eastern or south-eastern direction, such as the North Syrian basalt massif.

Prospects for the Future: Stylite Pillars and Landscape Archaeology

Systematic research into the archaeology of the stylite is still in its infancy and the facts speak for themselves. To date, only a fraction of stylite pillars—let alone their related monasteries—have been studied or even identified (see Fig. 1 and the gazetteer). The situation is still more deplorable outside Syria where, in the limestone massif, one can still find the highest concentration of archaeologically attested stylite *martyria*.

That said, to develop the 'archaeology of the stylite' further the author of this article suggests the following agenda:

a) In the first place, it is essential to return to the pillars and to re-consider the many 'forgotten' or 'minor' pieces of evidence still to be found at the sites in order to shed important light on the pillars' construction, their demolition, the liturgy of the stylites and elements of popular piety.[172] We particularly need to reassess:

i) the design and material content of the bases, shafts and pedestals of the pillars and their enclosures;
ii) the various openings ('niches') to hold sacred vessels, relics and icons, and the smaller holes used to lift the drums during construction and to fix clamps, ladders, ropes, chains and struts;
iii) the physical modifications to the stylite sites caused by the pilgrims (e.g. graffiti and traces of chiseling to obtain *eulogiai*, particularly evident at Qalʿat Simʿān);[173]
iv) the geometry of the broken surfaces of the column drums, to determine the cause of destruction;

[172] There is still much more to discover in the pillars' surroundings. A Syriac *tabula ansata* at Dayr al-Malik, still *in situ* and unpublished, is one example. Two photographs of the inscription, which is placed on the southern facade of the communal building of the monastery (i.e. facing the pillar), have been catalogued in the University of Oxford, Institute of Archaeology, *Georges Tchalenko Archive*, inventory no. TLD-21–2/3.

[173] De Vogüé (1865–1877) vol. 1, 149, fig. 45 shows the state of the pillar before reconstruction. This said, I have no proof whether the trunk set up on the base today is the original one. For Symeon's pillar and the work undertaken by Krencker see above, n. 29.

v) the design and later modification of the top column drums, to determine the construction and possible design of the lost platforms (particularly well preserved at Kīmār and Androna).

Furthermore, a topographical survey is needed for all those sites that could still hold unrecorded remains of a pillar and which bear names like *ʿamūd (al-ḥabīs)*, *esṭunā*, *ṣawmaʿa* etc. (e.g. the hamlet Umm ʿAmūd, i.e. 'Mother of (the) Column' in Jabal Ḥāṣṣ). This research should also consider other types of vertical structures, and the towers (*pyrgoi*, *burgātā* and *al-burūj*) of that period in particular.[174] These watch-towers (both for defence and the 'control' of agricultural land), dwelling towers (especially hermit's towers) and border towers (to demarcate boundaries) were so closely related to the pillars of the ascetics that some pillars were actually described as 'tower-like (*pyrgoeideis*)'.[175] Moreover, these towers were built in the same spatial settings as the pillars (uniquely, a tower together with a stylite pillar can still be found at Qaṣr Brād, visible in Fig. 5b), fulfilled similar functions (especially of dwelling and ascetic *stasis*), and shared the same role in the symbolic Christianisation of the surrounding land.[176] Jovinian, the successor in 700 of Symeon 'of the Olives' on Symeon's pillar and the subsequent superior of Symeon's monastery, had earlier lived as a recluse in a tower at Mār Elīshā monastery.[177]

b) Secondly, we need to re-consider the stylite *martyria* within the wider context of monastic archaeology. The objective would be to single out the particularities, conceptual and practical, of the stylite (as opposed to the non-stylite) monasteries.

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[174] Studies of towers—though somehow sketchy—only exist for Egypt, by Descoudres (1998); Palestine, by Festugière (1963); (with restrictions) for Syria, by Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 30–33, 161, 173, 433, and for Mesopotamia, by Palmer (1990) 102–105.

[175] See above, p. 333; also Lafontaine-Dosogne (1971) 186–87, and the representation of Symeon at Göreme, Tokalı Kilise (Jolivet-Lévy (1993) pl. V, fig. 6).

[176] These similarities have already been observed by Palmer (1990) 105 and 217–18, where the author also discusses the interchangeability of the terms 'column' and 'tower' in the Syriac tongue, and by Fiey (1968) 242–43 in his discussion of the monasteries in Bēth Aramāyē (present-day northern Iraq), who observes that many ruins in Mesopotamia still testify to this past by their Arabic toponyms or the epithet *al-qāʾim*, 'the rising (one)'.

[177] *L.Symeon Olives*, 140 (summary: 177).

c) Finally, the author proposes a reassessment of a selected number of pillars and stylite *martyria* using the methods now common in landscape archaeology. The reasons are obvious: like the late antique towers, the pillars of the ascetics were landmarks—'true sights' and 'suns'[178]—precisely erected to 'claim' land and to add a specific Christian connotation to their surrounding space. Several of these pillars were erected atop highplaces (e.g. on Jabal Srīr and Jabal Shaykh Barakāt), and Symeon's pillar above Telneshē simply juxtaposed (and finally superceded, visually and practically) one of the most eminent pagan highplaces of Roman Syria. Since many—if not all—stylites lived a profoundly apostolic vocation,[179] one should also not be surprised to find many of their *martyria* well placed and highly visible along ancient routes of transport and communication (in northern Syria, the plain of Dānā and Jabal Simʿān were situated at the main crossroads between the Mediterranean and its Syro-Mesopotamian hinterland)[180] or near commercial and administrative centres, such as the *martyrium* of the unknown stylite near Brād.

Today, archaeology is in a stronger position than ever to elucidate the stylites' symbolic 'appropriation' of their surroundings through elevation models and viewshed/*GIS*. The use of viewshed, of which an example is given below, would allow us to take into full account the enormous visibility of these pillars[181] and to better understand the visual, practical and symbolic significance of the pillars' heights and location.[182]

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[178] See n. 182 below.

[179] See above, pp. 366–70 (pilgrimage), Kötting (1953) and Ashbrook-Harvey (2006A) 164: "Stylites were saints whose service was unceasing in its generosity to the world around them, a world that had turned to the pillar ascetics in adulation and supplication for every kind of care".

[180] See Fig. 1, inset, and Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 2, pls. XXXVI and XXVIII.

[181] Most but not all pillars could be seen from 360 degrees (which could also be illustrated by panoramic photography).

[182] See above, p. 337, and the account of Abraham and Mārūn: John of Ephesus describes Mārūn on top of his pillar as a great sight, 'the sun' (*shemsā*) that shone beyond the monastery and attracted the attention of the entire countryside (*L.Abraham/Mārūn*, chap. 4). Shining like 'the sun' is a *topos* of many saints in the hagiographic sources and can be traced as far as Visigothic Spain: *cuius vultus fulgebat ut sol* (*Life of Valerio of Bierzo*, ed. Aherne 1949, 121). An instructive archaeological reconstruction of such a scenario, where the stylite's pillar also projected beyond the walls of the monastery, on Jabal Srīr, is reproduced in Callot (1997) 747, fig. 6. In view of the flat surroundings,

A viewshed analysis of the stylites of northern Syria shall bring this paper to a conclusion, considering all the pillars on the plain of Dānā and its surroundings in their three-dimensional setting. The results are shown in Fig. 15. The three-dimensional model reveals the line of sight from the top of each pillar, but more significant here is how easily the stylites could be seen. A traveller on the Roman road from Antioch to Dānā and Chalcis/Beroea would have found himself, whether willing or not, within the visual range of a holy man for over 10 km or 2 to 3 hours travel and never more than 2.4 km distant from the next pillar ascetic. If the same traveller decided to turn north at Dānā, to Cyrrhus, this proximity would have continued for *ca.* 20 km or 5–6 hours of travel. The visual, and perhaps also the benefactory impact on the traveller, who was 'caught' in a web of lines of sight, are difficult to assess, but must have been captivating. In his two-volume *Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529*, Trombley has summarised the process of Christianisation in this micro-region as reflected in the epigraphic record and building activity.[183] The viewshed approach now adds to this picture by showing that, by the 6th c. (if not earlier) the entire region would have been further Christianised through the pervasive visual presence of the holy men on their pillars.

The stylites have gone (the last stylite was attested in 1851).[184] Yet the opportunity for future research on their lives and *martyria* remains, and has much to offer to our understanding of the stylites and their legacy and of their place in the late antique world.

Postscript

While finalising this paper I came across Newsletter no. 35 (Spring/Summer 2006) of the UK-based *Trestle Theatre Company*, in which the editors announced *Stylite!*, an intense new play by Ali Smith. Inspired by the stylites "who stood on pillars for many years at a time for

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the 'sun effect' must have been equally spectacular in places like aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa, Kīmār, Androna and elsewhere; see above, p. 339.

[183] Trombley (1993) vol. 2, 253–74. More general, and setting the phenomenon into a wider, Mediterranean context, Caseau (1999B) 30–40 and (2004) 118–34.

[184] The only photograph of a living stylite dates to 1851 when, in Athens, one could still witness a stylite's cage, a *boutē*, on top of the architrave of the temple of Olympian Zeus; see Daux (1956) 624, and pl. 14.

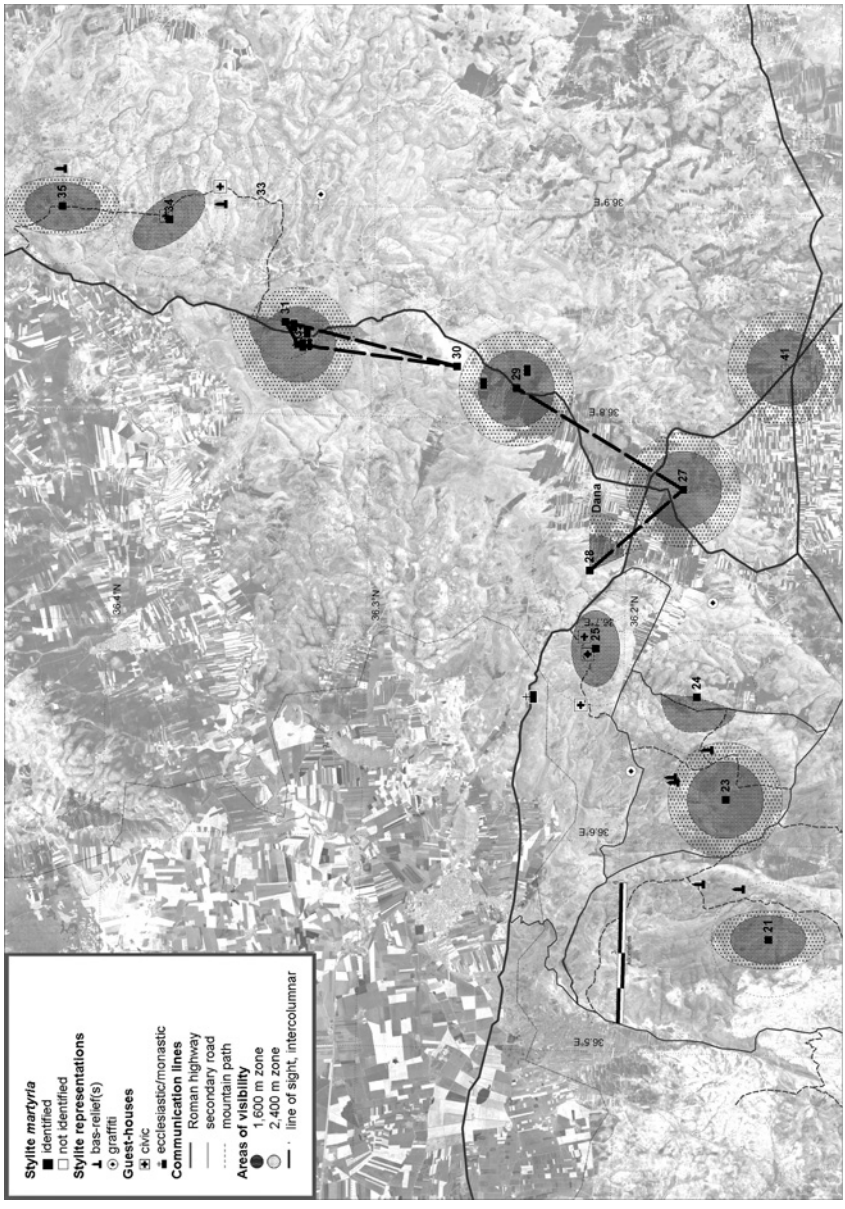

Fig. 15 The North Syrian Limestone Massif: stylite martyria and visibility. The circles/ellipses schematise the hypothetical areas of visibility of the stylites indicated, the longer, spherical radius axes measuring 1,600/2,400 metres, i.e. 100/150 times the length of a pillar 16 m high. As this map is based on hand-held GPS-data and satellite imagery (EarthSat ETM+, WRS-2, Path 174, Row 035, taken on 22 June 2000), the map only loosely considers the vertical variations of the pillars and of the terrain. The dotted lines indicate lines of sight between two stylite martyria. Sites nos. [30] and [33] could not be visited personally.

the greater good of humanity", *Stylite!* explores—in a combination of realism and surrealism—the manipulation of belief and manipulation of image, celebrity culture, style over content, political and religious rhetoric, the risk of dissent and the everyday workings of power. *Stylite!* shows that in the public discourse the legacy of the stylites is still present, and somehow *en vogue*. The play is yet another public examination of the legacy of the stylites after, amongst others, Lord Alfred Tennyson's fine poem on Symeon the Elder (1842), and Luis Buñuel's short film satire *Simón del desierto* (Symeon of the Desert) of 1965. It is also delightful to compare Buñuel's cinematographic realisation of the pillar ascetic, his column, *El Diablo* (Silvia Pinal) and 'the desert'—Telneshē had never been a desert environment—to the evidence from archaeology.

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Appendix: Gazetteer of Stylites and Stylite *Martyria* (comprehensive down to *ca.* A.D. 800)

For each stylite is given their name (date; office), whether their site has been identified, and principal reference(s). Entries marked by an asterisk (*) are referred to in the text.

Egypt: **[1]** John (6th c.; superior)—not id. (Antinoopolis)—P. Turner 54;[185] **[2]** Theophilos (7th c.)—not id. (near Alexandria)—John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, chaps. 108–09;[186] **[3]** Agathō (d. approx. 732)—not id. (Sakhā, in the Delta)—Evelyn-White and Hauser (1926–1933) vol. 2, 281–82.

Arabia: **[4]** Abba Longinō (6th c.)—id. (Wādī ʿAyn al-Kanīsa, Mt. Nebo)—Piccirillo (1994) 525–27; **[5]** unknown 1—id. (?, Umm ar-Raṣāṣ)—Mino and Piccirillo (1991) 9–12; **[6]** unknown 2 (6th c.)—not id. (near Petra)—*Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 129; **[7]** unknown 3 (6th c.)—not id. (Kafr Nasīj, Ḥawrān)—Nöldeke (1875) 429, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 69–70; **[8]** unknown 4 (7th c.)—id. (?, Jāsim)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 71–72.

Palestine: **[9]** Pancratius (5th c.; superior)—not id.—Cyril of Scythopolis (d. 558), *Life of Sabas*, chap. 90;[187] **[10]** David—not id. (Judean Desert)—*Narratio de monacho palestinensi*, chaps. 16–17;[188] **[11*]** unknown 1 (7th c.)—not id. (near Gethsemane)—Epiphanius Monachus, *De situ terrae sanctae*, chap. 8;[189] **[12]** unknown 2 (9th c.)—not id. (Bethlehem)—Delehaye (1962) cxxviii.

Phoenicia: **[13]** unknown 1 (6th c.)—id. (?, near Halbūn, north-west of Damascus)—Nöldeke (1875) 435–36, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 70–71; **[14]** unknown 2 (7th c.)—not id. (?, Marj Rāhit, north-east of Damascus)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 72, and Peña (2000) 229; **[15]** unknown 3 (6th c.)—id. (near Bayt Tīmā, on slopes of Mount Hermon)—Nöldeke (1875) 428, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 69–70; **[16]** Sergios (6th c.) and **[17]** Symeon (7th c.)—id. (Dayr Baʿantal, near Jussīya al-Kharāb)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 69, and Peña (2000) 240.

Syria:[190] **[18]** unknown (6th c.)—not id. (near Hierapolis)—*Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 36; Jabal Waṣṭānī: **[19*]** 'Symeon III' (?)—id. (Musrasras)—Nasrallah (1972) 128–30, and Callot and Gatier (2004) 580–82; Jabal Duwaylī: **[20*]** Sergios (?)—id. (Khirbat as-Sarj)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (2003) 64–66; Jabal al-Aʿlā: **[21*]** unknown 1 (6th c.)—Dayr al-Malik (west of Bshendlāyā)—Caquot (1958) 89; Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 2, pl. CLXIV, 5; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1990) 69, 72–73; Peña (2000) 189; **[22*]** unknown 2—id. (?, Ḥayr Abū ʿAmūd)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1990) 194–95; Jabal Barīshā:[191] **[23*]** unknown—id.

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[185] Bastianini (1981), introduction.

[186] Transl. Zotenberg and Charles (1916).

[187] Ed. Schwartz (1939); transl. Price and Binns (1991).

[188] Ed. Delehaye (1907) 162–75.

[189] Ed.and transl. Donner (1971).

[190] One or two more stylites (7th c.)—one named Sergius, the other unidentified (if not identical with the previous one)—are attested in a town called Gusiṭ near Ḥimṣ (*Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 418, and Hayman (1973) 1–6). Unfortunately these could not be considered in the numbering of the gazetteer.

[191] Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1987) 204–07 hypothesise the existence of seven more stylite *martyria* in Jabal Barīsha. As there is insufficient or inconclusive archaeological evidence, these are not listed here.

(aṣ-Ṣawmaʿa)—Castellana (1979) 212–14; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 152–55; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1987) 190–91, and Peña (2000) 215; **[24*]** Jōnān (6th c., superior)—id. (Kafr Daryān)—Mattern (1944) 92; Caquot (1958) 97; Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 171, 277–79, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 87–100; **[25*]** Mār Gabrā (?)—id. (?, Dayr Bābisqā A)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1983) 110–15, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1987) 27–32; **[26*]** Timothy (d. approx. 830)—not id. (Kākhushtā)[192]—*L.Timothy (Styl.)*, and Foss (Forthcoming); Jabal Srīr: **[27*]** Jōḥannān (?)—id. (above Ṭall ʿAqibrīn)—Caquot (1958) 105; Callot (1997) 739–40, and Callot and Gatier (2004) 579–80; Jabal Ḥalaqa: **[28*]** unknown—id. (Burdaqlī)—Callot and Gatier (2004) 580; **[29*]** Abraham (later metropolitan of Edessa, ordained by John V in Ṭall ʿAdē between 936–53)—id. (west of Dayr Ṭūrmanīn)—*Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 124 ('de la Colonne du couvent de Ṭall ʿAdē'), 464 (= appendix 3, no. XXV); Tchalenko (1953–1958), vol. 2, pls. XLVIII, CLXVIII; Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 119–25, and Callot and Gatier (2004) 578, n. 28; **[30*]** unknown—id. (Jabal Shaykh Barakāt)—Callot (1997) 737–38, and Callot and Gatier (2004) 579; Jabal Simʿān: **[31*]** Symeon the Elder (d. 459)—id. (Qalʿat Simʿān)—*L.Symeon Styl. Sen.*; Krencker (1939); Tchalenko (1953–1958) vol. 1, 223–76; Sodini (1993B); Sodini (2004), and Strube (1993) 205–52; **[32*]** unknown 1 (6th c.)—id. (Dayr Simʿān, west of North-West Monastery)—Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 40, 141–49, and Callot (1989) 112–13, 115–16; **[33]** unknown 2 (6th c.?)—id. (?, Burj Ḥaydar)—Baccache and Tchalenko (1979–1980) vol. 1, 17, fig. 33, and Tchalenko (1990) 25; **[34*]** unknown 3 (6th c.?)—id. (Qaṣr Brād)—Butler (1920) 313–15; Castellana (1979) 207–12, and Callot (1989) 112; **[35*]** unknown 4 (6th c.?)—id. (Kīmār)—Lassus (1947) 272, 277, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 150–55; **[36]** John IV[193] (later patriarch 910–22) and **[37*]** John VI (later patriarch 954–57)—id. (?, Qurzēḥil)—*Chron. Barhebræus*, vol. 1, 395–400 (= nos. LXIX, LXXII); *Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 121, 461 (= appendix 3, no. XXIII); Caquot (1958) 103, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 133–40; Plain of Chalcis: **[38]** Paul (6th c.)—id. (?, Kafr Yaḥmūl)—Caquot (1958) 98, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 101–107; **[39]** Eusṭat (6th c.)—id.

[192] Unidentified village situated near Imma (present-day Yeni Şehir).

[193] As patriarch, John ordained three more bishops/metropolitans who bore the epithet 'of the Pillar': Thomas of Takrit, Symeon, bishop of Jīshrā on the Euphrates, and Theodorus (*Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 461–62 (= appendix 3, no. XXIII)); similarly, Basilius, patriarch from 923–35, ordained Julius 'of the Pillar' metropolitan of Mayperqaṭ/Martyropolis (present-day Silvan; *Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 463 (= appendix 3, no. XXIV)). With the exception of Thomas [53], here too it remains an open question whether 'of the Pillar' (which also occurs in other instances, e.g. no. [54]) designates a stylite or simply a descendant of a stylite monastery (e.g. of Qurzēḥil or Dayr Ṭell ʿAdē, west of Dayr Ṭūrmanīn [29]). The monasteries most frequently referred to as 'of the Pillar' (*[dayrā(tā)] d-esṭunā[]*) in the Syriac sources are: (near) Callinicum [59] and (near) Nisibis [62]. *Dayrātā d-esṭunā* can also be found in the modern toponyms of Dēr Stūnē [77] and Dayr Astūn [78].

(?, Toqād)—Caquot (1958) 105, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 108–12; **[40]** Symeon (6th c.)—id. (?, Erḥāb)—Caquot (1958) 94, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 113–18; **[41]** unknown 5 (7th–8th c.)—id. (?, al-Athārib)—Caquot (1958) 105, and Peña, Castellana and Fernandez (1975) 126–32; Basalt Massif: **[42*]** Jacob (?)—id. (Androna, present-day al-Andarīn)—Mango (2005); **[43]** unknown 6 (?)—id. (?, Rasm Ṭall al-Ḥalāwa)—Butler (1920) 64–65, and Mango (2005) 338–39; Wondrous Mountain (near Antioch): **[44]** John (superior; master of Symeon, 528–41)—id. (?)—*L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*, chap. 65, and Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 115, plan E; **[45*]** Symeon the Younger (d. 592)—id.—*L.Symeon Styl. Iun.*; Mécérian (1962), and Djobadze and Hendy (1986) 57–115.

Cilicia: **[46]** Abba Julian (6th c.)—not id. (near Ægaion)[194]—*Spiritual Meadow*, chaps. 27–28, 57–58; **[47]** Symeon (6th c.)—not id. (4 miles from Ægaion, presumably 24 miles from Abba Julian [46])—*Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 57; **[48]** unknown 1 (6th c.)—not id. (approx. 20 miles from Ægaion)—*Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 29; **[49]** unknown 2 (6th c.)—not id. (approx. 20 miles from Ægaion, approx. 6 miles from unknown 1 [48])—*Spiritual Meadow*, chap. 29.

Osrhoene: **[50]** Thomas (8th c.)—not id. (near Ṭellā/Constantina, present-day Viran Şehir)—*Chron. Ẓuqnin 775*, A.G. 1021/A.D. 709–710, 1040/728–29, and *Life of Theodotus of Amida*, fols. 64b, 67a;[195] **[51]** Lazarus (later metropolitan, from 848)—not id. (Beth Bātīn, near Ḥarrān)[196]—*Chron. Barhebræus*, vol. 3, 195–96 (= no. XLI); **[52]** Theodosius (9th c.)—not id. (near Edessa)—*Life* of Theodore, bishop of Edessa—Segal (1970) 208; **[53]** Thomas (later metropolitan of Takrīt, ordained by John IV [36] 910/1)—not id. ('de la Colonne de la montagne d'Édesse')—*Chron. Barhebræus*, vol. 3, 235–38 (= no. XLV); *Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 461 (= appendix 3, no. XXIII); **[54]** John, 'of the Pillar' (later bishop of Rēsh ʿAynā/Theodosiopolis, ordained by John VII between 965–85)—not id. (near Sarug = present-day Sürüç, near Edessa)—*Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 130, 466 (= appendix 3, no. XXIX); **[55]** Cosmas (later metropolitan of Resafah/Sergiopolis, ordained by John VII between 965–85)—not id. ('de la colonne qui est dans le monastère de Mār Barṣawmā de Sarug')—*Chron. Michael*, vol. 3, 466 (= appendix 3, no. XXIX); **[56]** Theodoulos (4th c.) (*sic!*)—not id. (near Edessa)—Segal (1970) 109;

[194] In the Gulf of Alexandretta (Jones and Avi-Yonah (1971) 197–207).

[195] MS Dam. 12/18, fols. 58a–69b. Ed. Palmer (Forthcoming).

[196] Was Lazarus, the stylite and later metropolitan, a late homonym of the early ascetic, who also lived near Ḥarrān in the days of Constantine, and whose "nom est demeuré complètement inconnu" (Vööbus (1978) 105)? While a monastery bearing the name Lazarus (?, likely the early ascetic, and not the stylite) is mentioned in an inscription among the remains of a building complex ('Qaṣr al-Banāt') in Tektek Dağları, between Ḥarrān and Viran Şehir (Oppenheim (1899–1900) vol. 1, 168–69, no. 4, and Bell and Mango (1982) 149–50), the location of Bēth Bātīn, seat of a synod in 795, is entirely unclear. The monastery of Mār Lazarus near Ḥabsenus, with its pillar erected in 791/2, also derives its name from the early saint (and his mortal remains).

[57] Symeon (d. 520–22) and **[58]** Thomas of Dara (d. 520–22)—not id. (near Callinicum, present-day ar-Raqqa)—*Chron. Michael*, vol. 2, 172; **[59*]** unknown 1 (Monastery of the Column; 6th–7th c.)—id. (?, near Callinicum: Ṭall Bīʾa?)—Honigmann (1954) 53, 119; Krebernik (1991) 51–52, and Kalla and Carruba (2003).

Mesopotamia: **[60*]** Abraham and Mārūn (6th c.; superior)—not id. (monastery of Arʿā Rabtā, in territory of Ingilene)—*L.Abraham/Mārūn*; **[61]** unknown 1 (7th c.)—not id. (near Dara)—Vööbus (1958–1988) vol. 3, 308 (al-Waqīdī); **[62*]** Symeon 'of the Olives' (until 700, later bishop of Ḥarrān; superior) and Jovinian (from 700; superior)—not id. (Monastery of the Column, near Nisibis)[197]—*L.Symeon Olives*, 130–32 (summary: 175–76); **[63]** Theodotus (8th c.)—not id. (near Qalūq, between Dara and Amida)—*Chron. Ẓuqnin 775*, A.G. 1040/A.D. 728–29; **[64]** Zachariah (8th c.)—not id.—*Chron. Ẓuqnin 775*, A.G. 1072/A.D. 760–61; **[65]** unknown 2 (7th c.)—not id. (?, Mār Elīshā monastery, outside the east gate of Nisibis)—*L.Symeon Olives*, 140 (summary: 177); Tūr ʿAbdīn (5th–6th c.);[198] **[66]** Abel (elder contemporary of Philoxenos of Mabbug, d. 523)—not id. (Mār Abraham and Mār Abel monastery, on the eastern edge of Midyat)—Bell and Mango (1982) 8, 10, 35–38, 51, 131, and Palmer (1990) 77, 113–14; **[67]** Cyrus the Old, **[68]** Matthew (?),[199] **[69]** Daniel, **[70]** John, **[71]** Tuthael, **[72]** Jacob the Old, **[73]** Gabriel, **[74]** George and **[75]** Sergius—not id.—Palmer (1990) 77, 79–80, 196–97; **[76*]** unknown 1 (late 7th c.-)[200]—id. (Mār Lazarus monastery, near Ḥabsenus)—*L.Symeon Olives*, 151 (summary: 178); Bell and Mango (1982) 110–11; Palmer (1990) 105–107, 217, and Mango (2005) 340–42; **[77*]** unknown—id. (Dēr Stūnē)—Wiessner (1981) vol. III/1, 103–05, and vol. III/2, 35, fig. XXI.

Adiabene: **[78]** Michael (*ca.* 600)—id. (?, Dayr Astūn, near Moṣṣul)—Fiey (1965) 620–25, and Fiey (1977) 55.

Paphlagonia: **[79*]** Alypius (d. *ca.* 620)—not id. (Hadrianopolis)—*L.Alypius Styl.*, and Delehaye (1962) lxxvi–lxxxv.

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[197] A century ago, Armalet, a Catholic priest, found the following Syriac inscription on a stone near the church of Mār Jacob in Nisibis (present-day Nusaybin): 'This is the column (?, *shāqā*) of the deceased, among the saints, Mār Abraham, bishop, Ṭiṭus, of ʿArfū (?) […] his prayer be with us' (Armalet (1913) 850). If *shāqā* does signify 'column' or 'pillar' (Armalet translates the term into Arabic *ʿamūd*), Abraham/Ṭiṭus could have been—as Fiey (1977) 127 had already noted—a pillar saint or saints of an unknown time. The inscription adds to the complexity of the stylite scenario at Nisibis, but there is no evidence that would allow us to understand the eventual relationship between Abraham/Ṭiṭus' pillar, the Monastery of the Column, and the unknown stylite [65] to the east of the city gate.

[198] [66] to [75] are offshoots (*zriʿtā[tā]*) of or related to Mār Gabriel monastery, near Qarṭamīn.

[199] Matthew, a contemporary of John Chrysostom (thus living before Symeon the Elder), seems to have lived in a tower rather than on a column; see Palmer (1990) 105.

[200] The monastery was founded during the lifetime of Symeon 'of the Olives' (d. 734), whereas the pillar was erected later, in 791/92.

Asia: **[80*]** Lazarus (d. 1054), **[81]** Kerykos, **[82]** Nikon, **[83]** Merkurios and **[84]** Laurentios—not id. (Mount Galesion, near Ephesus)—*L. Lazaros (Styl.)*,[201] and Talbot (2001) 271–74.

Constantinople: **[85*]** Daniel (d. 493)—not id. (Anaplous)[202]—*L. Daniel Styl.*, and Kaplan (2001); **[86*]** Luke (d. *ca.* 979)—not id. (Eutropius)—*L. Luke Styl.*

Gaul: **[87*]** Vulfilaic (6th c.)—not id. (near Trier)—Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, book VIII, chap. 15.[203]

Abbreviations

AMS = *Acta martyrum et sanctorum syriace*, ed. Bedjan (1890–1897).

An. chron. ad a. 1234 = *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad AD 1234 pertinens*, ed. Chabot (1920).

Chron. Barhebræus = Gregory Barhebræus (Abū l-Farāj, d. 1286), *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. and transl. Abbeloos (1872).

Chron. Michael = Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), *Chronicon*, ed. and transl. Chabot (1899–1924).

Chron. Zuqnin 775 = *Chronicon anonymum pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, ed. Chabot (1933); transl. Harrak (1999).

Evagrius, *HE* = *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, edd. Bidez and Parmentier (1898).

IGLS I–II = *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, edd. Jalabert and Mouterde (1929; 1939).

L. Abraham/Mārūn = John of Ephesus (d. 586), *Lives of Abraham and Mārūn*, ed. and transl. Brooks (1923–1925) 56–84.

L. Alypius Styl. (d. *ca.* 620) = *Life of Alypius the Stylite*, ed. Delehaye (1962) 148–87.

L. Daniel Styl. (d. 493) = *Life of Daniel Stylites*, ed. Delehaye (1962) 1–147; transl. Dawes and Baynes (1948) 1–71.

L. Lazaros (Styl.) (d. 1054) = Gregory the Cellarer, *Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion*, ed. Delehaye (1910) 508–88; transl. Greenfield (2000).

L. Luke Styl. (d. 979) = *Life of Luke the Stylite*, ed. Delehaye (1962) 195–237; ed. and transl. Vanderstuyf (1914).

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[201] Kerykos: chap. 159; Nikon, Merkurios: chap. 175, and Laurentios: chap. 71.

[202] On Anaplous, situated near Arnavut Köyü or Akıntı Burnu, and Sosthenion (present-day Istinye), the likely site of Daniel's pillar, see Pargoire (1898) 73–82, and Janin (1969) 338–40, 347–49.

[203] Ed. Krusch and Levison (1951); transl. Thorpe (1974). The influence of the North Syrian stylites can also be traced in the Merovingian crypt of Mellebaude in Poitiers where a bas-relief, late 7th c. (?), shows one of the two Symeons; see Mâle (1950) 303.

L. Symeon Olives (d. 734) [MS Mardin, Syriac Orthodox 8.259, 203–47] = *Life of Symeon of the Olives*, ed. Dawlabani (1959); summary Brock (1979) 174–79.
L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Ant. (d. 459) = Antonius, *Life of Symeon Stylites*, ed. Lietzmann (1908); transl. Doran (1992) 85–100.
L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Gr. Theod. = Theodoret of Cyrrhus (d. 466), *Life of Symeon Stylites*, edd. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen (1977) vol. 2, 158–215; transl. Price (1985) 160–76; Doran (1992) 67–84.
L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr. (BL) [MS British Library Add. 14484] = Symeon bar Apollōn—Bār Hatar, *Life of Symeon Stylites*, transl. Lietzmann (1908).
L. Symeon Styl. Sen. Syr. (V) [MS Vatican 160] = Symeon bar Apollōn—Bār Hatar, *Life of Symeon Stylites*, ed. Assemani (1748/1970) vol. 2, 268–398; transl. Doran (1992) 101–98.
L. Symeon Styl. Iun. (d. 592) = *Life of Symeon Stylites*, ed. and transl. Van den Ven (1962).
L. Timothy (Styl.) (P) (d. *ca.* 830) [MS Paris ar. 259] = *Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā*, ed. and transl. Lamoreaux and Cairala (2000) 468–525.
L. Timothy (Styl.) (S) [MS Saidnaya 94] = *Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā*, ed. and transl. Lamoreaux and Cairala (2000) 526–613.
Spiritual Meadow = John Moschus (d. 619), *Pratum spirituale*, ed. Rouët de Journel (1946); transl. Wortley (1992).
Theod. *Hist. Mon. Syr.* = Theodoret, *Histoire des moines de Syrie: Histoire Philothée*, edd. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen (1977).
Theophanes, *Chronicle* = *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. De Boor (1883).

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MAGIC AND RELIGION

MAGIC AND SYNCRETIC RELIGIOUS CULTURE IN THE EAST

Arja Karivieri

Abstract

This paper presents a general introduction to magic and syncretic religious culture in the Eastern Roman empire in Late Antiquity. Examples of magical rituals, texts and the materials used in the rites are presented. Imperial edicts against pagan religions and magic rituals in the 4th and early 5th c. changed the scene, and practising pagans were forced to perform these rituals in private. Neoplatonists in Athens emphasised the importance of magic and ancient rites, as vehicles for contact with the gods. In Attica, the extensive use of cave sanctuaries in Late Antiquity can possibly be connected with the activities of the Neoplatonists and with religious syncretism.

An ever-increasing number of publications aim at discussing the different aspects of magic, idolatry, demonology, what was considered illegitimate or legitimate magic in Antiquity, and the impact of magic on Christianity.[1] The bulk of our sources are provided by ancient literature, recipes in the so-called magical papyri, curses on tablets and epitaphs, amulets and *prophylactica*, since other categories of evidence, especially organic material utilised in the ancient magical rites, are largely unavailable for our studies. This paper aims to provide an overview of recent scholarly discussion on magic, as well as presenting various categories of objects that were utilised in everyday magic in the eastern part of the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity, with the help of both literary and archaeological sources.

[1] For various approaches to magic, see, for example, Hoffman (2002) and Fowler (2005). The updated second edition of Georg Luck's collection of ancient magical and occult texts *Arcana Mundi* includes a revised introduction to the study of ancient magic, Luck (2006) 1–29, as well as an epilogue, "The Survival of Ancient Magic" on 457–78 including a discussion of the development of magic from Late Antiquity to the Byzantine period. A short introduction to magical rites is provided by Graf, Fowler and Nagy (2005). Important general presentations for Graeco-Roman magic are Dickie (2001), Faraone (1999), Gager (1992), Luck (2000), Ogden (2001) and Ogden (2002).

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
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To start with, what do we know about magic in Antiquity? How can we differentiate magic from religion? Most recently, Sarah Iles Johnston, in her study of sacrifice in the Greek Magical Papyri concluded that magic and religion are difficult to distinguish from one another. Sacrifice had a central role both in religion and in magic; the magical rituals were modifications of established rituals and magicians were known to have an enhanced ability to communicate with the gods.[2] Fritz Graf emphasises in his study on theories of magic in Antiquity that already Apuleius (A.D. *ca.* 125–*ca.* 180) presented three definitions of magic, of which the third is especially interesting for our study: magic has as its main vehicle speech, the prayer that created the theurgic, concordant communion of the gods with humans.[3] Augustine (A.D. 354–430) believed that pagan superstition and the association of men and demons worked on the basis of a language whose signs were chosen by the demons. Graf interprets this as the special ritual language confined to magic that used strange words, *voces magicae*.[4]

According to Augustine, both magicians and saints performed miracles, but the miracles of a magician are smaller, and magicians abuse the divine names through having a private contract with a demon, whereas saints act on behalf of God.[5] For Augustine, private rituals were exclusively pagan rituals, magical rituals addressed to demons. Magic had become illegitimate, private religion.[6] To Augustine, theurgy was only a more honorific name for magic, and he saw sorcery, divination and theurgy as the opposite of Christianity, as magic is veneration of demons.[7] In *De doctrina Christiana* he gives advice on how to separate magic, divination and idolatry from the universe of the Christians.[8] Graf has summarised the Early Christian view on magic as follows: the concept of intention distinguishes magic from religion, since an invocation to the Virgin, Christ or the saints with good intentions is religious, but magical when made with evil intentions.[9]

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[2] Johnston (2002) 344–45 and 357–58.
[3] Apul. *Apol.* 26.6; Graf (2002a) 93–94.
[4] August., *de doctr. Christiana* 2.36–37; Graf (2002a) 96–97.
[5] August., *Div. quaest.* 79.2; Graf (2002b) 94.
[6] *Div. quaest.* 79.1; Graf (2002a) 99–100.
[7] August., *De. civ. D.* 10.9; Graf (2002b) 100–101.
[8] Graf (2002b) 102.
[9] Graf (2002a) 104.

Magical Statues

Christopher Faraone explains the word 'magic' as a set of practical devices and rituals used in Antiquity in daily life to control or persuade supernaturally the forces of nature, animals or human beings.[10] Faraone has pointed out that the rituals that have usually been divided into the categories of 'religion' and 'magic' can actually be placed in a wider spectrum of 'rhetorical' strategies, where each ritual represents a rhetorical strategy designed for a specific context. In connection with statues, this spectrum starts from the manipulation of bound and buried statues to persuade hostile divinities to become harmless or to lock them away in a temple. Certain Greek statues of powerful divinities were bound as a precaution against *evocatio*. An example from this category is the Trojan Palladium. These statues were small and portable, they were either imprisoned in a temple or bound, and could cause fear, madness, blindness or sterility. In times of peace all of these statues were bound or hidden in their temples for the whole year, except for one day when the *status quo* was reiterated, the statues were released briefly and bound anew.[11]

In Late Antiquity, talismanic statues that protected a city or individuals were called '*tetelesmenon*'.[12] Such statues were imbued with numinous power, they gave signals, like sweat or tears, they could move, speak, glow or shoot fire, revealing their supernatural nature.[13] The famous Neoplatonic teacher of Julian the Apostate (emperor 361–3), Maximus of Ephesus, a renowned theurgist, is said to have been able to animate a statue of Hecate, so that the goddess started to smile and laugh and the torches in her hands shot fire.[14] That the ability to animate statues was a part of the practice of Neoplatonic theurgy is also emphasised in the *De mysteriis* of Iamblichus of Chalcis (*ca.* A.D. 250–325), an important source for late antique magical rituals.[15]

Guardian statues were treated with special care. In ancient Greece, the Athena Polias statue on the Acropolis at Athens, for example,

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[10] Faraone (1999) 16.
[11] Faraone (1992) 119 and 136–38.
[12] Faraone (1992) 4.
[13] Cf. Lucian, *Περὶ τῆς Συρίης θεοῦ* 10 and 36; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, I, 23, 13; van Liefferinge (1999) 89–91.
[14] Eunap. *V. Soph.* 473–5; Brown (1998a) 624.
[15] For an exhaustive discussion on theurgy, see van Liefferinge (1999).

was washed during the Plynteria according to the secret rites of Praxiergidai.[16] Many such guardian statues were said to have fallen from heaven,[17] as with the image of Athena on the Acropolis and the Trojan Palladium. In Late Antiquity, Julian the Apostate in his *Hymn to the Mother of the Gods* refers to the story connected with the introduction of the cult of Cybele to Rome from Phrygia in 204 B.C. that the goddess was a stone that had fallen from heaven.[18] Julian believed that this statue of the Mother of the Gods was animated (μὴ ξόανον… ἄψυχον),[19] and that the goddess showed the Romans that the statue was 'no work of men's hands but truly divine, not lifeless clay but a thing possessed of life and divine powers' (οὔτε ἄψυχον γῆν, ἀλλὰ ἔμπνουν τι χρῆμα καὶ δαιμόνιον).[20]

Another form of protective image, the *apotropaion*, was usually placed by the gate of a city or a building to avert evildoers. They could be placed in niches in city walls, near the gates.[21] The Greeks erected stationary *apotropaia* especially to Apollo and Herakles. As Faraone has demonstrated, in Late Antiquity the role of Herakles and other protective deities remained important. Herakles as Kallinikos protected private houses—an inscription referring to Herakles Kallinikos was placed over the door lintel—while images of door guardians, *theoi prothyraioi* (gods before the door), were set up at the thresholds of private houses and other buildings.[22] According to Rufinus of Aquileia (*ca.* 345–410/11), busts of Serapis protected the doorways, windows and walls of houses in Alexandria. These busts were removed by the Christians after the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria in A.D. 391 and were replaced by symbols of the cross,[23] reflecting a Christian awareness of such symbols and one aspect of how the visible image of the city centre could be Christianised after the destruction of the temples.

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[16] Parker (1983) 26; Faraone (1992) 116 and 123 n. 12.
[17] Faraone (1992) 7.
[18] Cf. Ovid, *Fast.* IV 247–348; Livy, XXIX 10.
[19] Julian, *in deor. matr.* 160a; Fontaine, Prato & Marcone (1987); commentary by Marcone, 271.
[20] Julian, *in deor. matr.* 160d-161a; Wright (1980); transl. Wright (1980) 449.
[21] Faraone (1992) 4 and 8.
[22] Faraone (1992) 8, 57.
[23] Rufin, *HE* 11.29; cf. Fowden (1998) 553. For more archaeological evidence on iconoclasm and religious hatred in Late Antiquity, see Sauer (2003).

Astheriomorphic statues of dogs and lions acted as phylacteries, guardians against evil, to protect from the animals depicted. An eastern Greek tradition was to employ dog and lion statues at the entrances of cities and monumental buildings, and to place effigies of the bow-bearing gods Apollo, Artemis and Herakles at the gates of cities to avert plague.[24] This practice seems to have continued in Late Antiquity, as is suggested by a Hebrew manuscript from the Cairo Genizah, dated to the 3rd or 4th c. A.D.:[25]

> If you wish to expel from the city every dangerous wild animal, whether lion, or wolf, or bear, or leopard…make a bronze image in the likeness of the one [which you desire to expel] and then make an iron *lamella* and write upon it, on the obverse and reverse, the names of the angels [of the seventh step] and bind it upon [the image] and bury it at the entrance of the city and let its face be facing north.

These bronze images were buried in an entranceway. Animal images were also used as amulets, such as brazen replicas of obnoxious insects or animals, the so-called *telesmata*. The unwanted animals and insects were thus averted by their effigies.[26]

Magical Texts

The magical properties of animals, plants, stones and minerals were treated by many ancient writers in medical and encyclopaedic texts. Demonology, astrology, necromancy and magic were discussed already by Democritus in the 2nd c. B.C. and his texts were well known among later writers. A large collection of 24 books on magical and medical recipes and comments was compiled by Sextus Julius Africanus in the late 2nd c. A.D. The largest corpus of Greek magical texts that has survived derives from the library of a professional magician active in Upper Egypt in the late 4th-early 5th c. A.D.[27]

An important group of magical texts, *defixiones* or *katadesmoi*, were inscribed, thin sheets of lead, ostraka, pieces of stone, papyrus or wax

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[24] Faraone (1992) 113.

[25] *Sepher Ha-Razim* 2.110–14, transl. Morgan (1983); Faraone (1992) 39–40 and 49.

[26] Faraone (1992) 40.

[27] Faraone (1999) 11 and 14–15.

intended to invoke supernatural power to bring other persons or animals under the control of the person who ordered or inscribed the object. The text was inscribed with a bronze stylus, usually by professionals, *magoi* or scribes. The earliest *katadesmoi* from the Classical period were simple, but in the Roman period the tablets include rich language with mystical words and formulas.[28]

The short, simple formulas of the earlier tablets were connected with oral prayers and invocations. The earlier mystical terms continued to appear in the Late Roman texts, where the oral part of the invocation was written down on the tablet in addition to the traditional elements.[29] The central form of ancient Greek prayer, invocation, argument and request, was believed to persuade a divinity when the right words and arguments were used. According to Tambiah the Greeks used 'persuasive analogy' to encourage future activity.[30] With the correct performance of the ritual, the proper words and the right magical formula it was possible to persuade the object of the *defixio* to become similar to something completely different.[31]

On some of the Late Roman tablets, the text consists mostly of *voces mysticae* or unintelligible writing, drawings and animal figures, some of them possibly astrological characters. The presence of Egyptian elements increased in Late Antiquity, because most such tablets were produced and copied in Egypt. While dolls and figurines could be attached to the tablets in the earlier periods, they could in Late Antiquity be represented in the form of a drawing on the tablet itself instead, and the text may include palindromes, *charakteres* (written signs or symbols), vowels, geometric shapes, names ending in -el or -oth, mystic words and recurrent formulas (Fig. 1).[32]

In Neoplatonic theurgy, *charakteres* and foreign names conveyed to the theurgist the powers of the gods, which signalled the passage from the lower realms into the true connection with the higher orders of being. These *charakteres* appear on amulets, *defixiones*, in recipes for *defixiones* and in the treatises of Gnostics. The *charakteres* as religious symbols

[28] Gager (1992) 3–5; Graf (2005) 264–70.
[29] Gager (1992) 7.
[30] Tambiah (1968) and (1973).
[31] Faraone (1992) 118.
[32] Gager (1992) 6–9.

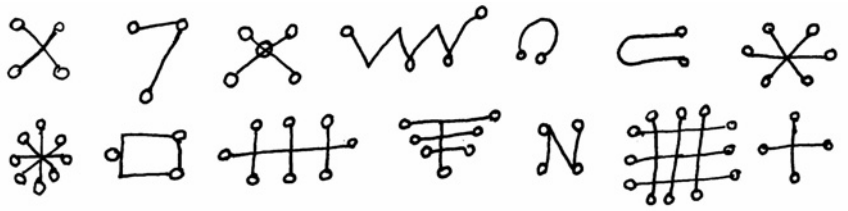

Fig. 1 A selection of *charakteres* used in *defixiones* and other tablets in the Mediterranean region.

seem to have had their origin in astrology, but became personifications of great power.[33]

The drawings of human beings, animals and 'mixed creatures' in *defixiones* embody the actors mentioned in the text, the target of the spell and supernatural beings (Fig. 2). The drawings were intended to prefigure the desired outcome and effect of the spell, to harm the target. The names of the spiritual entities on *defixiones* refer to supernatural beings, gods, *daimones*, heavenly bodies and spirits of the dead. Hermes is the most common name in the spells, followed by Hecate, the Eleusinian divinities, Ge/Gaia, even Zeus, Meter Theon and the Furies. Names of Egyptian deities are connected with names of Greek gods, *daimones*, personified words and *voces mysticae*. In the East, Jewish, Persian and Christian names also occur in the texts in Late Antiquity.[34] The texts include the name of the target and, when needed, the name of the client, and, from the 2nd c. A.D. onward, the name of the mother.[35]

Faraone presents a threefold division of formulas in *defixiones*:

1. performative utterance
2. prayer formulas appealing for supernatural assistance
3. persuasive analogy comparing the target with the characteristics of something in the spell, appealing for divine assistance[36]

For modern studies, the most spectacular detail of ancient *defixiones* is the practice of using dolls or figurines attached to the inscribed tablet. They were made of lead, mud or wax and usually had their hands bound behind their back, or they were deliberately mutilated

[33] Gager (1992) 9–11.
[34] Gager (1992) 11–13.
[35] Gager (1992) 14.
[36] Faraone (1991a) 4–10; Gager (1992) 13.

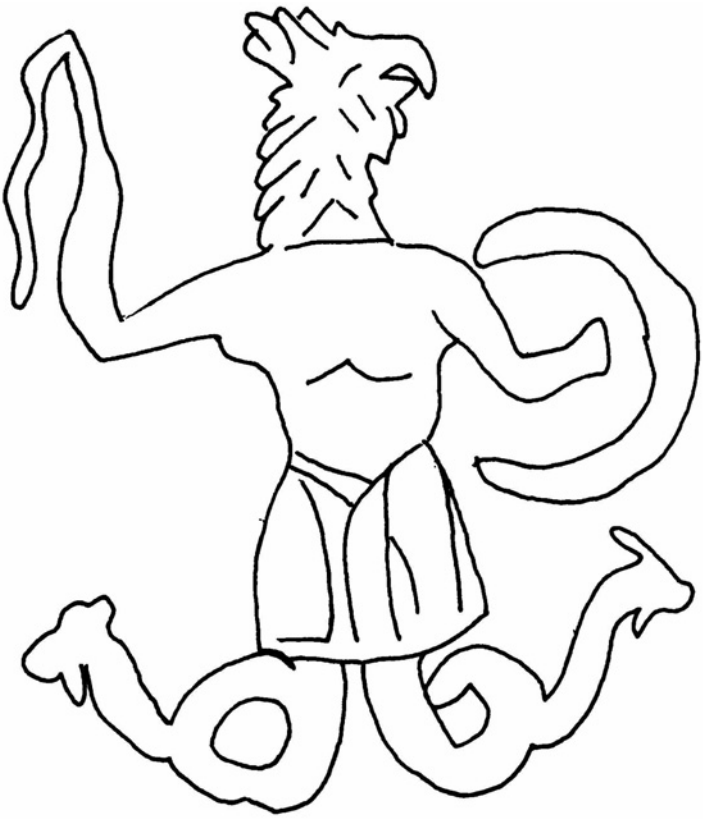

Fig. 2 Cock-headed anguipede, a magical divinity that appears in *defixiones* and amulets.

or pierced by nails. The name of the target was often written on the figurine. In love or sex spells the figurine represents the object of one's desire, but they were not always intended to harm the target of the spell. Another type of figurines was made to harm personal enemies. A third example are animal figurines, such as horses representing the competing teams in chariot races.[37]

Another important tool in ancient magic was to use hair or a piece of clothing for love spells. For example, a tablet from the Athenian Agora, dated to the 3rd c. A.D. (Inv. no. IL 1737), has both imprints left by hair and some strands of dark brown hair, probably belonging

[37] Faraone (1991b); Gager (1992) 15.

to Tyche, the target of the spell.[38] Hair or a piece of clothing makes the desired person present, since a part of a person can stand for the whole.[39]

Spells Connected with Sports

I have chosen some examples of *defixiones*, to represent the variety of spells from different parts of the Eastern Roman empire in Late Antiquity. The first two examples are connected with sports. The first is a small lead curse tablet rolled up as a scroll, from the mid-3rd c. A.D., that comes from a well in the Athenian Agora. It was published in 1985 by David Jordan together with a group of other *defixiones* and includes a curse against a wrestler:[40]

> *BÔRPHORBABARBORBABARPHORBABORBORBAIÊ, powerful BETPUT I deliver to you Eutuchianos, to whom Eutuchia gave birth, that you may chill him and his resolve, and in your gloomy air also those who are with him. Bind him in the unlit realm of oblivion, chill and destroy the wrestling which he is about to do in the De…ei this coming Friday. And if he does wrestle, I hand over to you MOZO[U]NÊ ALCHEINÊ PE[R]PERTHARÔNA IAIA, Eutuchianos, to whom Eutuchia gave birth, in order that he may fall down and make a fool of himself. Powerful Typhon KOLCHOI TONTONON Seth SATH[AÔCH] EA Lord APOMX *PHRIOURIGX, regarding the disappearing and chilling of Eutuchianos, to whom Eutuchia gave birth, KOLCHOICH[EILÔPS, let Eutuchianos grow cold and not be in condition this coming Friday, but let him be weak. As these names grow cold, so let Eutuchianos grow cold, to whom Eutuchia gave birth, whom Aithalês promotes.[41]

The second is an example of spells connected with chariot races, used against one's competitors. This example from Apamea in Syria is a lead tablet from the late 5th to the early 6th c., found rolled up. Above the text itself, there are two lines of signs, 36 *charaktêres*, signs embodying the higher powers invoked to carry out the spell:[42]

> Most holy Lord *Charaktêres*, tie up, bind the feet, the hands, the sinews, the eyes, the knees, the courage, the leaps, the whip (?), the victory and

[38] Jordan (1985) 251–52.
[39] Hopfner (1974) 401–408, §667–77; Jordan (1985) 251; Gager (1992) 17–18.
[40] Gager (1992) 50, no. 3; Jordan (1985) 214–15, no. 1; Dickie (2001) 243–45.
[41] Transl Gager (1992) 50–51, no. 3.
[42] Transl. Gager (1992) 56–58, no. 6.

> the crowning of Porphuras and Hapsicratês, who are in the middle left, as well as his co-drivers of the Blue colors in the stable of Eugenius. From this very hour, from today, may they not eat or drink or sleep; instead, from the (starting) gates may they see *daimones* (of those) who have died prematurely, spirits (of those) who have died violently, and the fire of Hephaestus…in the hippodrome at the moment when they are about to compete may they not squeeze over, may they not collide, may they not extend, may they not force (us) out, may they not overtake, may they not break off (in a new direction?) for the entire day when they are about to race. May they be broken, may they be dragged (on the ground), may they be destroyed; by Topos and by Zablas. Now, now, quickly, quickly!

Homoeopathic Magic

In ancient Greek oath ceremonies men killed and butchered oxen, sheep, pigs and dogs and prayed to be treated like these animals if they violated their oaths. During both public and individual ceremonies, smaller animals such as lizards were used in interpersonal curses and erotic charms.[43] A famous example of homoeopathic magic is provided in the autobiographical oration of Libanius. In A.D. 386, after suffering a severe headache, Libanius could not read, write or speak to his pupils. Mysteriously, a twisted and mutilated body of a chameleon was found in Libanius' lecture hall, which he interpreted as a token of the sufferings that an enemy desired for him.[44]

Love Spells

Christopher Faraone has made an excellent survey of love spells, which reveals new and interesting results. His study shows that there are two main categories of love spells: men used love magic mainly to raise erotic passion, *eros*, in women, while women used magic rituals to maintain or increase affection, *philia*, in men.[45] Some binding spells were used to restrain rivals in love, to reduce the competition by inhibiting the actions of a rival.[46] Love spells were sometimes con-

[43] Faraone (1993) 65–72; Faraone (1999) 65.
[44] Lib. *Or.* 1.243–50; Bonner (1932) 36–39.
[45] Faraone (1999) ix.
[46] Faraone (1999) 12.

nected with dolls and figurines, and the two examples here represent two different solutions used by the clients. The first, a love spell from Antinoöpolis in Egypt, dated to the 3rd or 4th c. A.D., was attached to a clay doll pierced by 13 needles.[47] The female voodoo doll was placed in a clay pot with a folded lead tablet, addressed to the ghost of Antinoos:[48]

> I conjure you, spirit of the dead man, Antinoos, by the name that causes fear and trembling, the name at whose sound the earth opens, the name at whose terrifying sound the spirits are terrified, the name at whose sound rivers and rocks burst asunder… Do not fail, spirit of the dead man, Antinoos, but arouse yourself for me and go to every place, into every quarter, into every house and draw to me Ptolemais, to whom Aias[49] gave birth, the daughter of Ôrigenês and with a spell keep her from eating and drinking until she comes to me, Sarapammôn, to whom Area gave birth, and do not allow her to accept for pleasure the attempt of any man, just that of me, Sarapammôn. Drag her by the hair and her heart until she no longer stands aloof from me, Sarapammôn, to whom Area gave birth, and I hold Ptolemais herself, to whom Aias gave birth, the daughter of Ôrigenês, obedient for all the time of my life, filled with love for me, desiring me, speaking to me things she has on her mind. If you accomplish this for me, I will set you free.[50]

Another love spell from Upper Egypt, from the 5th c. A.D., was attached to wax figurines representing a couple.[51] The *agoge* binding spell was found inside a sealed clay vessel binding the pair of wax puppets in an embrace:[52]

> Rouse yourselves, you *daimones* who lie here and seek out Euphêmia, to whom Dôrothea gave birth, for Theôn, to whom Proechia gave birth. Let her not be able to sleep for the entire night, but lead her until she comes to his feet, loving him with a frenzied love, with affection and with sexual intercourse. For I have bound her brain and hands and viscera and genitals and heart for the love of me, Theôn… Grab Euphemia and lead her to me, Theôn, loving me with a frenzied love, and bind her with bonds that are unbreakable, strong and adamantine, so that she loves me, Theôn, and do not allow her to eat, drink, sleep, or joke or laugh,

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[47] Gager (1992) 97–100, no. 28, fig. 13.

[48] Faraone (1999) 41–42.

[49] Transl. Gager (1992), 100, who gives here, by mistake, Area as Ptolemais' mother.

[50] Transl. Gager (1992) 99–100, no. 28. This is a part of the spell that starts with the words: 'I entrust this binding spell to you, gods of the underworld'.

[51] Gager (1992) 101–106, no. 30, fig. 14.

[52] Wortmann (1968) 85–102, no. 4, fig. 9; Gager (1992) 101–106, no. 30, fig. 14; Brashear (1992) plate 11; Faraone (1999) 62, n. 100.

> but make (her) rush out…abandon father, mother, brothers, and sisters, until she comes to me, Theôn, loving me, wanting me (with a) divine, unceasing, and a wild love. And if she holds someone else to her bosom, let her put him out, forget him, and hate him, but love, desire, and want me; may she give herself to me freely and do nothing contrary to my will. You holy names and powers, be strong and carry out this perfect spell. Now, now. Quickly, quickly.[53]

Defensive Rituals and Execration Magic

Binding magic was also used to defeat enemies, by binding the images of the enemies and restricting their movements. Images were bound, buried or burned in pre-emptive defensive rituals to destroy or inhibit personal and public enemies. A story told by Olympiodorus of Thebes in the first half of the 5th c. A.D. is cited by Photius. Three silver statues were bound and consecrated to ward off a hostile enemy and to prevent them from attacking the Thracian border, but when the statues were removed, the Goths, the Huns and the Sarmatians invaded Illyricum and Thrace.[54]

Nicole B. Hansen has recently presented a thorough study of the evidence for ancient execration magic in Coptic and Islamic Egypt. Part of the instruction texts are preserved in an Arabic Coptic Christian manuscript utilising the Psalms as the formulae.[55] In these texts, a variety of objects could represent the victim: wax, a jar, a potsherd, copper, a frog or paper, even blood could be a component of execration figurines.[56] The figurines were made of clay, lead or wax, often with unnaturally twisted limbs. The effigies of the victim were then subjected to binding, cutting, piercing, drowning or burning. Part of the Egyptian execration ritual was to place the figurines in a jar.[57] Bathhouses were commonly thought to be haunted by evil spirits, and the bathhouse furnace was utilised for burning execration figurines and magical amulets.[58] Meyer has suggested that some new monks

[53] Transl. Gager (1992) 103–106, no. 30. For the complete spell and commentary, see Gager (1992) 101–106.

[54] Olympiodorus of Thebes, *FHG* 4.63.27 = Photius, *Bibl.* 80 (Blockley, *frag.* 27); Faraone (1991b) 168–170; Faraone (1992) 76, 84, 113.

[55] Hansen (2002) 429.

[56] Hansen (2002) 433 and 435–36.

[57] Faraone (1991b) 190–191; Hansen (2002) 436–37.

[58] Hansen (2002) 439.

began their careers in pagan temples before converting to Christianity and that they took the magical rituals from the temples to the monasteries,[59] which could help to explain the popularity of magic among Christians in Late Antiquity. As Hansen observes, "a virtual web of borrowings between pagan, Jewish, Christian and Islamic magicians are possible routes of transmission".[60]

Burial places could be protected by using a spell. An example of curses on an epitaph is provided by the following inscription, an epitaph of Euphemia the intendent that was found in the wall of the church of Agios Athanasios in ancient Paiania in Attica. Erkki Sironen points out that the text, which he dates to the 5th or 6th c. A.D., is an anthology of curses, possibly drawn from several sources:[61]

> The sepulcher of Euphemia the intendent, a young woman of 45 years, prudent and having her hand ready for beneficence according to her ability. Anybody who attempts to bury a stranger, a local, or her relative, at any time or in any way, shall give account to the [a]lmighty Go[d] and to the heavenly powers [and] to the powers in the air and on the [ground] and to the subterranean powers, and he shall share the same fate as those who said: "Away with him! Crucify him!" At that time the clerics, most dear to God, shall also give account to the aforementioned powers, and they shall have the curses of God if they allow anyone else to be buried (here), as was said, or to remove those who lie here to another place.

Syncretic Spells

Some spells are clearly syncretic, such as the following spell on an ostrakon, from the 3rd or 4th c. A.D., from Eshmunein in Egypt, which invokes the Greek god Kronos but includes Jewish/Christian and non-Christian names:[62]

> Kronos who restrains the anger/passion of all mankind, restrain the anger/passion of Hôri, to whom Maria gave birth, and let him not speak to/against Hatros, to whom Taêsês gave birth, for I adjure you by the finger of God that he should not open his mouth (against/to) him, because he belongs to Kronos and is subject to Kronos. Let him not speak to him, neither by night nor day nor any hour.

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[59] Meyer and Smith (1994) 261; Hansen (2002) 440.
[60] Hansen (2002) 443.
[61] Sironen (1997) 258–61, no. 226.
[62] Transl. Gager (1992) 209, no. 111.

Necromancy and Lecanomancy

The Greek Magical Papyri in Paris are the most important source for necromantic spells for communicating with the dead. We know of the practice of incubation at tombs: it was believed that the dead spoke to the living in dreams.[63] Black sheep were usually sacrificed during necromantic rites, when the moon was full; for Hecate, black puppies were sacrificed.[64] The rites were normally organised around a pit for blood and libations and a fire for the burying of the holocaust sacrifice for the underworld ghosts; sometimes the pit served as a hearth for the fire. During the libations, water, milk, honey, wine and olive oil were used with grain.[65] The necromancer began the rites with a polite request to the ghost, but when that failed he used a second spell that was threatening and addressed the ghosts by their true names.

The Greek Magical Papyri include recipes for necromancy, phylacteries against demons, erotic binding spells, astrology, lecanomancies, exorcism, the inducing of dreams and other spells.[66] One special category concerns *Homeromanteion*, when randomly selected verses of Homer were given magical power. A person frames an enquiry and throws a die three times. There are 216 possible combinations, from 1.1.1 up to 6.6.6, and each combination corresponds to a Homeric verse. These verses make up a form of magical text, a Homeric oracle.[67]

Lecanomancy, the use of bowls for divination, was popular especially in Mesopotamia and Syria, where special bowls could be used for incantations during Late Antiquity. Most of the bowls have Jewish Aramaic texts, others are written in Mandaic or Syriac. These bowls have magic formulas, figures and symbols inscribed on the inner side of the bowl, which was filled with water before the ritual.[68] A Syriac bowl, now in the Finnish National Museum, has a magic text in Eastern Aramaic Koiné. The bowl is dated to the 7th c. by Tapani Harviainen according to the letter forms. He suggested that the writer of the incantation used a Syriac dialect which had much in common with

[63] Tert. *De anim.* 57; Cyril. *Adv. Iul.* 10.1024b–c (*PG* 76); Ogden (2001) xxx, 7, 11.
[64] For necromancy in ancient Greece, see Johnston (1999).
[65] Ogden (2001) 167–72.
[66] Ogden (2001) 138.
[67] *PGM* 7.1–167; Ogden (2002) 208–209, no. 167; see also Schwendner (2002) for *Homeromanteion* in Egypt.
[68] Gager (1992) 226–29, no. 122.

Fig. 3 A Syriac bowl from the 7th c. A.D., with a magic text in Eastern Aramaic Koiné. Courtesy National Museum of Finland/Collections of The Museum of Cultures (Inv. no. VK 5738:3).

Mandaic and Jewish Aramaic, where formulas and names had been borrowed from one religion and language to the other.[69] The text is written in spiral form in fourteen lines, starting from a Maltese cross in the middle of the bottom of the bowl, including the following parts (Fig. 3):

[69] Harviainen (1978) 5 and 27–28.

> This amulet bowl is designated for the salvation and guarding of the house and abode of Farrukhdadh, son of Bawai, and Shishin, daughter of Gushnai, and of Mahbodh and Mahadur Gushnasp and Bar Gadbehar, sons of Shishin. The mystery amulet of heaven is buried in heaven and the mystery amulet of earth is buried in earth, and this is the mystery amulet of the house. But I say against the sorceries and against all the magical practices and against all the amulet-spirits and the ishtars and against all the demons and the devils and the mighty satans and the mighty liliths, (I) declare this decree unto you: Every one who accepts Yah, attains good, but who accepts wickedness, the mystery words come upon him, swords and sabres, and they stand up in front of him and kill him and the fire surrounds him and the flames fall upon him… Receive (pl.) peace from your Father who is in heaven and seven (greetings of) peace from the male gods and female ishtars, (from him) who sets victorious peace in (with) his Judgment, who sets the staggering destruction in fire… Moreover you (pl. fem.), spirits and the amulet-spirits, the liliths and the deceivers and the demons and the devils and the plague-spirits and the no-good-ones and the evil spirits and the impious amulet-spirits, the male idol-spirits and the ishtars and the curses and the accidents and the shames… and the vows and the trials and the worships and the spells, which are cursed and consumed and dissolved, go out… flee…!

Lychnomancy and the Use of Lamps in Sacrificial Rituals

The use of bowls for divination, lecanomancy, and lychnomancy, lamp-divination, are attested by numerous ancient sources. The Greek Magical Papyri include many recipes for both techniques that were used for the observation of flashing lights, in lecanomancy by observing the flashing lights in the surface of a liquid in the bowl, while in lychnomancy the divination was taken from images in the flame of a lamp.[70] Chthonic demons were summoned with the help of lamps to prophecy and send dreams and diseases. Such observations were often made by young boy-mediums in a state of trance,[71] and it was believed that the mortal light of the lamp was replaced during lychnomancy by a divine luminous form. A description of this type of divination is preserved in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (2.11), where Pamphile divines the weather from her lamp:[72]

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[70] See Rothaus (2000) 130, n. 27 for a list of spells using lamps in *PGM* and in Betz (1986).

[71] Ogden (2001) xxviii and 191–96; Ogden (2002) 173, no. 135 and 205–209, nos. 163–67.

[72] Ogden (2002) 206–207, no. 165.

> "This", I said, "is the first time I have seen this variety of divination. It is hardly surprising if this little flame of yours, for all that is modest and manmade, nonetheless remains mindful of that greater heavenly fire, as if of its own parent, and can consequently know by divine presentiment what that fire is going to do at the top of the ether and declare it to us".

Lychnomancy is not mentioned in the *De mysteriis* of Iamblichus, but the language in the spells known from the papyri recalls the theurgic invocations of Iamblichus' text.[73] The Greek Magical Papyri include for example an invocation of Apollo that was made holding in the right hand a twig with seven laurel leaves, the phylactery for the procedure. Then a non-red lamp with a linen wick where the sacred names were written, filled with rose oil and oil of spikenard, was placed on the head of a wolf. A sacrifice and libations were made on an altar of unbaked brick, seven flat and seven round cakes were made beside the lamp. When the sacrifice was made, the god Apollo entered the lamp at once, and it was possible to ask him the things one wanted. After the enquiry, the flame of the lamp was extinguished, and a sacrifice made to dismiss the god himself.[74]

The importance of lamps as votive offerings and in sacrificial rituals is attested well into Late Antiquity both by texts and by the numerous finds in ancient sanctuaries. A text attributed to John Chrysostom (*De pseudo-proph.* 7.59) denounces crypto-Christians who follow Jewish and Hellenic traditions, light lamps at the fountains and bathe in the fountains. Earlier in the 4th c., Cyril of Jerusalem tells us that lamps were lit and incense-offerings burnt by fountains and rivers,[75] a practice that recalls the large number of Late Roman lamps found in late antique cave sanctuaries.

Approximately 4000 terracotta lamps were found in the so-called Fountain of the Lamps in Corinth (Fig. 4) during the excavations in 1967–69. This Hellenistic fountain-bath went out of use by the end of the 4th c. A.D., after the collapse of the roof, and it was cleared and re-used in the Late Roman period as a cult room and repository for votive offerings, especially terracotta lamps and coins.[76] As the excavator James Wiseman suggested, this disused fountain became a place of magic until the end of the 6th c. when the structure collapsed and

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[73] Cf. *PGM* 4.1103 ff.; *PGM* 7.540 ff. Dodds (1947) 68–69.
[74] *PGM* 1.262–347; Ogden (2002) 207–208, no. 166.
[75] Cyril. Hieron. *Catech. myst.* I.8.33; Nilsson (1950) 108.
[76] Wiseman (1970) and (1972); Garnett (1975); Rothaus (2000) 126–34.

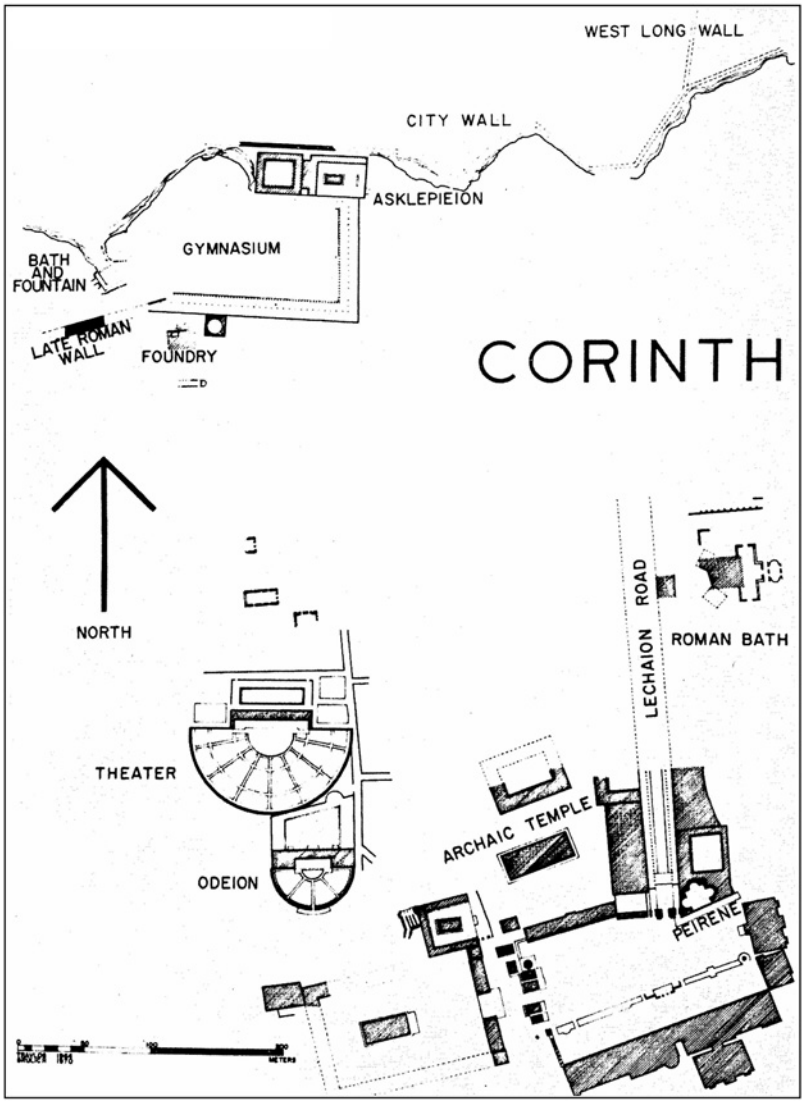

Fig. 4 Fountain of the Lamps located in the Gymnasium Area north of the theatre at Corinth. (Wiseman (1972), fig. 1; Courtesy of James Wiseman and the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).

was abandoned. Visitors to the cave left their votive offerings, usually terracotta lamps, to float in the chamber that was filled with uncontrolled water. Among the 4000 lamps there are around 400 products of the well-known Athenian workshops of the late 4th to the 6th c.,

while others are mainly local products. These lamps provide other important information concerning the magical rituals practised in the fountain. Four of the lamps carry graffiti with magical texts. The first one, which has a cross at the beginning of the inscription, has been translated by David Jordan as 'Angels who dwell upon these waters',[77] while the second text reads 'I invoke you by the great God Sabaoth, by Michael, by Gabriel, in order that you do…'.[78] According to Jordan, the third lamp carries the text: 'Be merciful to your servant Fabiana'.[79] The fourth lamp is possibly a love charm, mentioning the daughter of Erot—.[80] 45 coins were also found, many adhering to lamps, dated from the mid-4th c. to the reign of Justinian I (the latest from A.D. 546–47). Four large lead scrolls were likewise found, one of them carrying the representation of an anguipede who holds a raised sword in his right hand and a gleaming staff with a snake in his left, revealing an acquaintance with Jewish magic.[81] A small cross at the beginning of the first graffito refers to a Christian donor, and Jordan suggests that the fountain could have been used for nocturnal baptismal rituals.[82] Since the text on the first lamp refers to angels 'upon these waters', Jordan presents another explanation: the text could be compared with the Sheep Gate Pool in Jerusalem where the sick came to the pool to be healed by the water that the angels had stirred.[83] Richard Rothaus suggests that the site was also a cult place for the Nymphs, as one of the texts on the lead scrolls includes an invocation of the Nymphs.[84] In comparison with the other fountains and springs at Corinth, the Fountain of the Lamps seems to have had a special position. Most recently, Betsey Robinson has pointed out that excavations in the fountains of Peirene and Glauke have uncovered no signs of religious objects or

[77] Inv. no. L-69–103, Jordan (1994) 224, no. 1, fig. 1; Wiseman interpreted the text originally as 'Angels who dwell below among these Jews', Wiseman (1972) 28–30.

[78] Inv. no. L 4607, Jordan (1994) 224–25, no. 2, fig. 1; Wiseman's interpretation was 'I adjure you, great God Sabaoth, Iao, Baal, that you kindly bring it to pass that the 800th boundless year swell to fullness with these things', Wiseman (1972) 28–30.

[79] Inv. no. L-69–104, Jordan (1994) 225, no. 3, fig. 1; Wiseman's reading was 'You who can be appeased; Jesus, child of God. The slave of the Most High God, bought for Phoebus (dedicates this lamp)', which Wiseman interpreted as evidence of a thank-offering for manumission, given by a Jewish slave who was manumitted and converted to Christianity, Wiseman (1972) 28–30.

[80] Inv. no. L-69–105, Jordan (1994) 225–26, no. 4, fig. 1.

[81] Wiseman (1972) 33.

[82] Jordan (1994) 226 and 228.

[83] Jordan (1994) 226–27.

[84] Rothaus (2000) 129.

inscriptions, like the inscribed lamps in the Fountain of the Lamps, and she therefore characterises these fountains as "numinous".[85] All in all, the graffiti on the lamps and the *defixiones* show evidence for an interesting combination of pagan, Christian and even Jewish magic and cult practised in the Fountain of the Lamps, which can be interpreted as a proof for the syncretic religious culture of late antique Corinth. Corinthians may have come to the Fountain of the Lamps either to appeal to the angels or to invoke the Nymphs.

Official Reactions to Ancient Rituals, Sacrifices and Magic

What do legal texts and imperial administration tell us about official reactions to the ongoing popularity of ancient rituals, sacrifices and magic? The laws of Constantine I (306–37) were aimed at controlling the exercise of powers, such as divination and magic, executed by certain priests. In 319, legitimate licit magic for health and harvests was separated from 'illegitimate' illicit magic that was aimed at invocation of demons and bringing about someone's death or seduction by *malefici, incantatores, immissores* (*Cod. Theod.* 9.16.3). The same year, 319, Constantine prohibited soothsayers and priests (*haruspices* and *sacerdotes*) to approach private houses, but still allowed public ceremonies (*Cod. Theod.* 9.16.1–2). In 321, if lightning struck public buildings, a public consultation of soothsayers was allowed (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.1). Constantine's sons, Constans (337–50) and Constantius II (337–61) continued the actions against pagan sacrifice. On November 23, A.D. 353 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.5) nocturnal sacrifices were forbidden, and in 356 all sacrifices and the worship of images were forbidden (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.6). In 357–58 all forms of divination, the art of prediction, astrologers, augurers and sorcerers were forbidden.[86] In January 357 Constantius ordered Chaldeans, magi and others who were commonly called *malefici*, on account of the enormity of the crimes that they committed, not to practice any form of divination (*Cod. Theod.* 9.16.4).[87] An edict of Valentinian I and Valens from A.D. 364 forbade mystic

[85] Robinson (2005) 139.

[86] Chuvin (1990) 38–39; Harl (1990) 19; Kahlos (1998) 73–77.

[87] '*Chaldaei ac magi et ceteri, quos maleficos ob facinorum magnitudinem vulgus apellat, nec ad hanc partem aliquid moliantur*', transl. Pharr (1952) 237.

rites performed at night (*Cod. Theod.* 9.16.7),[88] but according to Zosimus (4.3.2–3), Praetextatus, proconsul of Achaia, secured exemption from this proposal for his province and allowed everything to be done according to original national custom.[89]

Divination, interpretation of signs and everyday magic continued to be important, even though both the imperial and civic authorities and the Church tried to prosecute magic-working. Theodosius I attempted a new action against active paganism with the edict given on the 8th of November 392:[90]

> No person at all, of any class or order whatsoever of men or of dignities, whether he occupies a position of power or has completed such honors, whether he is powerful by the lot of birth or is humble in lineage, legal status and fortune, shall sacrifice an innocent victim to senseless images in any place at all or in any city. He shall not, by more secret wickedness, venerate his lar with fire, his genius with wine, his penates with fragrant odors; he shall not burn lights to them, place incense before them, or suspend wreaths for them. (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12)[91]

As Chuvin emphasises, in late antique paganism ritual was more important than faith. Thus, the Christian emperors in the 4th c. progressively rejected the ancient cults and began by allowing pagan festivals to continue but prohibited the rituals during the festivals.[92] Towards the end of the 4th c., all the rituals, both public and private, were prohibited.

Christians considered pagan sacrifices as magic and demonology. Origen (184–253), defending Christ against Celsus, criticised sorcerers for utilising the help of evil pagan demons, and contrasted the worship of demons to Christianity.[93] Augustine saw pagan superstition as the product of a long association of men and demons ('*ex quadam pestifera societate hominum et daemonum*'), drawing upon a common language of

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[88] '(…) *ne quis deinceps nocturnis temporibus aut nefarias preces aut magicos apparatus aut sacrifica funesta celebrare conetur*', transl. Pharr (1952) 238; Kahlos (1998) 53–54, n. 31, 75, 103; Dickie (2001) 256.

[89] Kahlos (1998) 53–54, n. 31 for other references; Dickie (2001) 256; see also Fowden (1982) 58–59.

[90] Nilsson (1950) 109; Chuvin (1990) 1–2.

[91] Transl. Pharr (1952) 473.

[92] Chuvin (1990) 10–11.

[93] Origen, *contra Celsum* 7, 69: 'διόπερ ἡ πάντων δαιμόνων θεραπεία ἀλλοτρία ἡμῶν ἐστι, τῶν σεβόντων τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεόν, καὶ θεραπεία δαιμόνων ἐστὶ ἡ θεραπεία τῶν νομιζομένων θεῶν.'; Graf (2002a) 95, n. 11.

gestures, rituals and images with signs chosen by the demons.[94] Augustine likewise condemned pagan prophecies that suggested a 365-year time-span for the Christian religion and referred to the statement of Luke that 'it is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority' (Acts 1:7), although 'it is not surprising that it has not held back worshippers of the many false gods from inventing oracles from the evil spirits whom they revere as deities'.[95] The early Church was not, however, uniformly hostile to necromancy, as Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and Jews attributed Jesus with necromantic powers.[96]

The Church was also concerned about everyday magic, the use of incantations and amulets. The canons of the Early Church included detailed rulings of Basil of Caesarea (*ca.* 330–79) and Gregory of Nyssa (*ca.* 335–95) on the subject of magic, describing exact penalties for magic-working. Canon 36 attributed to the Council of Laodicea in the later 4th c. forbade a cleric from being a *magus* or an astrologer or one who makes phylacteries or performs incantations. Those wearing phylacteries, protective amulets, should be expelled from the Church.[97] This same canon is found among the canons of the Church in Carthage in the mid-6th c., but without the penalty of excommunication for wearing phylacteries: '*ut diaconus aut clericus magus et incantator non sit neque phylacteria faciat*'.[98]

However, the use of magical amulets continued in the Early Byzantine period, especially in Egypt in the Coptic church, as well as the use of white magic, as is attested by medicinal amulets, *eulogia* and ampullae including holy dust, water or oil from pilgrimage sites blessed by the saints. As Gary Vikan has put it: "each pilgrim was driven by the . . . conviction . . . that the sanctity of holy people, holy objects, and holy places was somehow transferable through physical contact".[99] Vikan's study analysed the Early Byzantine medicinal amulets found at the shrine of St. Symeon the Younger, located south-west of Antioch. The pilgrims to the site took pieces of blessed earth from the site as *prophylactica*. St. Symeon could also heal the devotees through bi-

[94] August., *De doctr. Christiana* 2.36–38; Graf (2002a) 96–97.
[95] August., *De civ. D.* 18.53, transl. and commentary Lee (2000) 124, no. 6.8.
[96] Ogden (2001) 158–59.
[97] *Canon 36* = Lauchert (1896) 76; Dickie (2001) 259–61.
[98] *Brev. Can.* 110 (*CCSL* 149.296); Dickie (2001) 261.
[99] Vikan (1984) 66.

location, when the devotee induced Symeon to come to him by burning incense, lighting lamps and by offering a prayer. Vikan suggested that this procedure could perhaps have been used at the shrine after Symeon's death in A.D. 592.[100] The image-bearing clay tokens, *eulogia*, were instrumental for contact with the saint through invocation and they were most popular in the late 6th and 7th c.[101] Pilgrimage-related amulets and votives were decorated with magical symbols and characters, such as *pentalpha*, stars, crescent moons, ring-signs, and words like *hygieia* and *Iaw*, and with images like the holy rider, the Palestinian christological cycle, and the Chnoubis with a serpent's body and the head of a lion surrounded by a nimbus and seven or twelve rays, seven for the planets or twelve for the signs of the zodiac (Fig. 5).[102] Another form of medicinal magic is known from the shrine of St. Menas near Alexandria, where the lamp a pilgrim had suspended was filled with fragrant oil. This oil had healing power, and could heal a sick person.[103] As Vikan has suggested, a hypothetical Early Byzantine medicine chest had the pharmaceutical powers of a Judeo-Christian and a Graeco-Egyptian pantheon, with Christ and the Chnoubis, St. Symeon and King Solomon, symbols like the cross and the *pentalpha*—"for the sake of health, Christianity and sorcery had been forced into open partnership".[104]

Magic, Theurgy and the Neoplatonists

Magic was a central part of ancient religious practice, and as we have already seen it was especially important for the Neoplatonists in Athens, who emphasised the importance of theurgy, of invoking the gods by ancient rites that represented Platonic symbols. They explained ancient rites and mysteries as vehicles for contact with the gods; sacrifice brought the human soul into communion with the divine. Theurgy became an important part of the religious practice of the Neoplatonists from Iamblichus onwards.[105] According to Damascius (*ca.* 458-after

[100] Vikan (1984) 71, n. 39.
[101] Vikan (1984) 73.
[102] Vikan (1984) 75–79.
[103] Vikan (1984) 81.
[104] Vikan (1984) 85–86.
[105] Iambl. *Myst.*; Harl (1990) 12; Dickie (2001) 205–206.

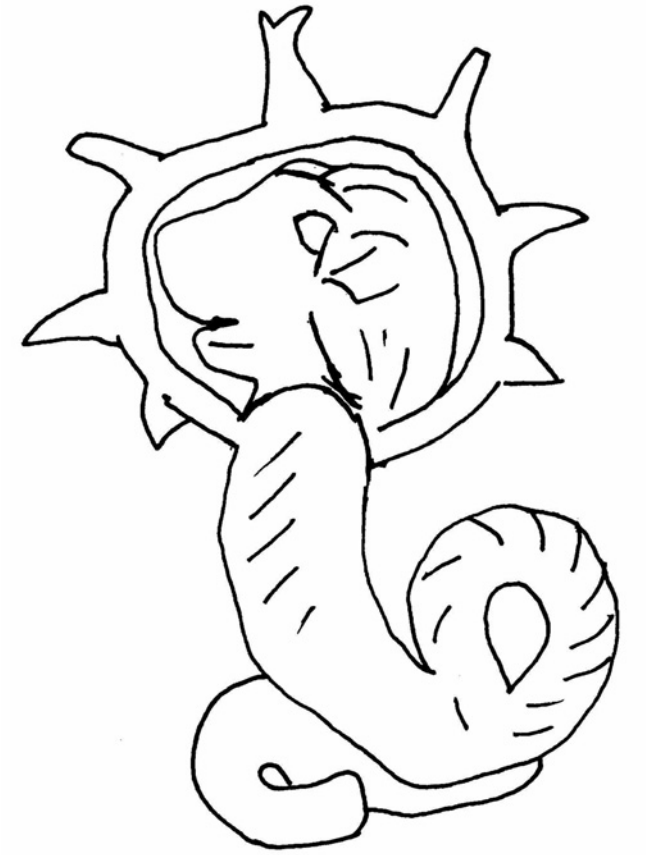

Fig. 5 Chnoubis, a lion-headed serpent with nimbus and rays, used as an amulet to treat abdominal disorders.

538), the last scholarch of the philosophical school of Athens, there were two different attitudes among the Neoplatonists to philosophy and religion, those who preferred philosophy, such as Plotinus and Porphyry in the 3rd c., and the others who preferred the hieratic art, like Iamblichus, Syrianus and Proclus.[106] The emperor Julian became the patron for Iamblichus' theurgy and consulted Iamblichus' follower the theurgist Maximus.[107]

[106] Olymp. (Damascius) *In Phaed.* 123.4; Sheppard (1982); Athanassiadi (1993a); Kahlos (1998) 131.
[107] Dodds (1947) 59.

Hecate plays an important part in magic as theurgists used *iunx*, Hecate's magical wheel, or her golden ball, *Hekatikos strophalos*, to assert their will over nature. The *iunx* was a spoked wheel with two holes on either side of the centre. The *strophalos* or *rhombus* was a golden ball covered with magical characters that was rotated at the end of a strap made of bull's hide. When the theurgist rotated the *rhombus*, he could make an invocation to the gods.[108] Theurgy also made use of σύμβολα, animals, plants and stones. Theurgists produced magical statuettes of gods by imprisoning the souls of demons and angels in consecrated images with the help of herbs, plants, gems and perfumes or through a magic name or formula inscribed on gold leaf or papyrus and animating the statuettes.[109] The manufacture and magical use of such images became a vogue.

Proclus (*ca.* 411–85), the leader of the Neoplatonic School in Athens in the 5th c., writes in his work *On the Hieratic Art* that every god has his sympathetic representative in the mineral, vegetable and animal world which contains a σύμβολον of its divine cause, and χαρακτῆρες, symbols of gods, could either be written down or uttered. Θεῖα σύμβολα can join the soul to the divine, to the One.[110] Iamblichus had likewise emphasised the importance of names in religion. The names cannot be translated, because the distorted names can no longer help the soul to ascend. Proclus, for his part, called words for αγάλματα τῶν πραγμάτων λογικά.[111]

According to Proclus, the soul could reach the level of the gods by means of theurgy, which was also called the sacred art (ἱερατική τέχνη). Therefore, theurgy was considered superior to philosophy, for it could lead man to the gods. Theurgy was divided into two kinds, lower and higher theurgy, where lower theurgy or sympathetic theurgy made use of material things of the actual world to stimulate the soul toward the One, the Unity.[112] Theurgic prayer was activated

[108] Gow (1934) 1–13; Luck (2000) 130–31; Dickie (2001) 207 and 351 n. 15.

[109] Cf. Iambl. *Myst.* V, 23 (233, 11–16); Dodds (1947) 63–64; van Liefferinge (1999) 88 and n. 404; Struck (2002b) 119–20, 123–25, 129.

[110] Proclus in Bidez (1928) 148 ff. Procl. *In Tim.* 1.273.11; Dodds (1947) 62; Sheppard (1982) 220–21; Struck (1999) 117–18; Luck (2000) 122 and 129; Struck (2002b). See also Iambl. *Myst.* V, 23 (34, 1–4 and 9–13); van Liefferinge (1999) 68 and n. 281.

[111] Iambl. *Myst.* 7.5; Procl. *In Parm.* 851.8; Athanassiadi (1993b) 120. See also the discussion in Struck (2002a).

[112] Rosán (1949) 212–17; Sheppard (1982) 213; Harl (1990) 12–13; for further discussion on theurgy, see Sheppard (1982) 213 and 224, who suggests that there are three types of theurgy instead of two.

by sacrifice.[113] As Dodds put it, theurgy may be described as "magic applied to a religious purpose", as theurgy used the procedures of vulgar magic to a religious end.[114]

Contact with the god could be achieved through a medium. An appeal or compulsion by the operator made the god enter the medium's body. Before the act both the operator and the medium had to purify themselves with fire and water[115] and dress in special chitons, and the medium bore a garland.[116] The manifestations took the form of luminous apparitions, a fiery or luminous form entering or leaving the medium's body, recalling lychnomanteia.[117]

Proclus had great knowledge of magic, and worked wonders. He had a deep conviction in the efficacy of ancient rites. His most spectacular theurgic achievements were when he ended a drought in Athens and moved away earthquakes with amulets.[118] He was well acquainted with both Orphic and Chaldean doctrines. As his biographer Marinus describes, 'Day and night he made use of apotropaic, lustratory, and other purifications, sometimes the Orphic, sometimes the Chaldean, going down to the sea without fear at the beginning of every month'.[119] According to Proclus 'a philosopher ought not to worship in the manner of a single city or the country of a few people, but should be the common priest of the entire world'.[120] And following Marinus' description of the deeds of Proclus, he 'learned with ease all of Greek and non-Greek theology and also that truth which had been hidden in the form of myths; he explained all these in a very enthusiastic manner to all who wished and were able to understand'.[121]

Proclus' connection with theurgy is attested by Marinus in the following text: 'He went to Chaldaic gatherings and (prayer) meetings, employed divine silent tops for strophalomancy, and in general practiced various things of this kind. He learned their significance and use from Asclepigeneia, the daughter of Plutarch; for she alone had preserved from (her grandfather) Nestorius, and through the intermediary of her father, the knowledge of the rituals and the whole theurgic

[113] Harl (1990) 13.
[114] Dodds (1947) 61.
[115] Procl. *In Crat.* 100.20.
[116] Dodds (1947) 66.
[117] Dodds (1947) 68.
[118] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 18–19, 28–30; Chuvin (1990) 104.
[119] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 18 (transl. Edwards (2000) 85–86).
[120] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 19 (transl. Edwards (2000) 88).
[121] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 22 (transl. Rosán (1949)).

science'.[122] Here it is important to point out that Theodosius II in A.D. 448 (*Cod. Just.* 1.1.3) ordered that the works of Porphyry and other pagan writers should be burned along with the works of Nestorius.[123] Marinus' text could possibly be seen as a reaction to this action: he seems to emphasise that Proclus received his information on theurgy from Asclepigeneia, the grand-daughter of Nestorius whose writings had been destroyed.

According to Marinus, Proclus was purified by the Chaldean rites and experienced the fiery apparitions of the lamp-bearing Hecate, the goddess of his hometown Byzantium.[124] Chaldean Oracles included prescriptions for a fire and sun cult, and spells for the magical evocations of gods.[125] Φωταγωγία, 'evocation of light', was another part of theurgy, where the theurgist stared at a lamp, prayed, and after a period of time became able to see an overwhelming radiance. The theurgists could see different types of light visions, or themselves radiate luminous apparitions of Hecate during rites, as Proclus did.[126] Proclus used the magical instrument of Hecate, the *iunx*, to release Attica from drought, and utilised theurgic practices to cure Asclepigeneia, the daughter of Archiadas and Plutarch, following the ancient rituals in the shrine of Asclepius.[127]

The Use of Subterranean Places and Cave Sanctuaries in Late Antiquity

There is another special aspect of the religious culture of Late Antiquity that we must consider here, namely the increased use of subterranean places and caves for sacrifice from the 4th to the 6th c.[128] In Attica, there are two important cave sanctuaries, the Phyle Pan Cave and the cave at Hymettos in Vari. Both caves were excavated at the beginning of the 20th c., and have revealed extensive use of these caves for sacrifice, providing thousands of terracotta lamps and other finds.[129] What was the reason for the new popularity of these cave

[122] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 28 (transl. Rosán (1949)).
[123] Cf. Harl (1990) 22.
[124] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 29.
[125] Dodds (1947) 56.
[126] Luck (2000) 124–25 and 132.
[127] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 29.
[128] See Trombley (1993) 43–44 for subterranean cults.
[129] Wickens (1986) for further bibliography; Fowden (1988).

sanctuaries? I would like to argue that the active cult in these caves, especially in the Cave at Vari, should be interpreted in connection with the theurgical rites of the Neoplatonists and the syncretic culture of Late Antiquity. The cave had a special symbolic value in Platonism. The allegory of the Cave in Plato's *Republic* was according to John H. Wright inspired by the Orphic view of Empedocles in *Purifications*.[130] The Neoplatonists compared the Grotto of Empedocles and the Cave of Plato, especially Porphyry in his *De Antro Nympharum* (3). Both Porphyry and Plotinus considered the two caves to be symbolical.[131]

The excavator of the Cave at Vari, Charles Heald Weller, supported slightly later by John H. Wright, already observed in the early 20th c., following Ernst Curtius, that the Cave at Vari has remarkable similarities with Plato's Cave. Their arguments for this identification were especially the topography, the form of the cave and the finds.[132] The cave is decorated with reliefs representing Pan, the Nymphs, and a seated female goddess. Inscriptions dedicated to Pan, the Nymphs and Apollo, terracotta figurines, coins, vases and terracotta lamps were found during the excavations in the cave. The finds attest to two peak periods of activity, the first from the 6th to the 2nd c. B.C. and the second from the 4th to the 6th c. A.D. Weller and Wright gave another argument for Plato's association with this cave. Both Aelian (A.D. 200) and Olympiodorus (A.D. 500) in his *Vita Platonis* declare that while Plato's father was sacrificing on Hymettus a swarm of bees gathered upon the lips of the sleeping infant Plato, made honey in his mouth and murmured there about his future eloquence. Aelian reports that the father sacrificed to the Muses or the Nymphs, Olympiodorus speaks about sacrifices to the divinities of the place, Pan, the Nymphs, and Apollo Nomios. Since this information coincides well with the finds from the Cave at Vari, Weller and Wright suggested that this could be the cave that Plato visited.[133]

The finds from the Vari cave show an interesting renewal of activity in Late Antiquity, which coincides chronologically with the activity of the Neoplatonic School at Athens. Garth Fowden suggested that the Platonists of Late Roman Athens visited the Vari cave, made offerings

[130] Wright (1906) 133–35.
[131] Wright (1906) 136–37, n. 4.
[132] Weller (1903) 287–88; Wright (1906) 140–41.
[133] Weller (1903) 287–88; Wright (1906) 141–42. Cf. Fowden (1988) 57, with a similar conclusion, without any reference to Weller's and Wright's articles.

and recalled the story about Plato's childhood.[134] During the same period, the Christian authorities had a hostile attitude towards pagan official sacrifices from the mid-4th c. onwards, but we can also trace the continuation of mythological motifs in iconography at this time and the introduction of Christian iconography in Late Roman art. A significant proportion of the thousand terracotta lamps from the Vari cave have Christian motifs and can be dated from the mid-5th to the early 6th c., while the earliest Late Roman lamps from the cave have mythological representations (Fig. 6).[135] Fowden sees this as another example of pagan cultic use of Christian lamps, as attested in other places, where Christian lamps were used when other lamps were not available.[136] I believe that the visitors to the cave who sacrificed lamps and coins were following the ancient theurgic rites—they could use either pagan or Christian lamps, for the light of the lamp was the central part of the ritual in the cave.

A similar phenomenon, i.e. the existence of votive offerings with both pagan and Christian iconography, is attested, for example, at the Sanctuary of Eros and Aphrodite on the northern slope of the Athenian Acropolis. There, four objects,[137] two lamps from the late 4th–early 5th c., a mould for a Christian lamp of the 6th c., and an ampulla, all indicate either a possible syncretistic use of the sanctuary in Late Antiquity or a conversion of this cave sanctuary to Christian use.

Epilogue

However, the most spectacular and intriguing find from Athens is the burial of a one-year-old pig with votive offerings, found in the so-called House of Proclus, a Late Roman house on the southern slope of the Acropolis.[138] The house itself had a private sanctuary in its eastern part, adjacent to the large apsidal hall, decorated with reliefs representing

[134] Fowden (1988) 57.

[135] Bassett (1903); see also Karivieri (1996) 52 for discussion about the date of the lamp finds from the Vari cave.

[136] Fowden (1988) 56.

[137] Cf. Broneer (1932) 40–43 and 48–49, fig. 17.

[138] Cf. Karivieri (1994) 133–39 with illustrations. For Late Roman houses in Athens, see in general Karivieri (1994); for a detailed study of statuary and pagan practice in Athens and Aphrodisias, see Stirling (2005) 198–210, 215–17, 224–27.

Fig. 6 Terracotta lamps with mythological representations, found in the cave at Vari. (Bassett (1903), pl. XIII; Courtesy of Archaeological Institute of America/*American Journal of Archaeology*).

Cybele and Pankrates.[139] The pig was found in the westernmost room of the house, buried under the floor with a large sacrificial knife in its neck, together with a jug, seven cups, a bowl and a lamp decorated with Eros, representing an Athenian imitation of an Asia Minor lamp that could plausibly be dated to the end of the 5th c. The sculptural decoration of the house, which also includes a bust of Isis, and this sac-

[139] Cf. Baumer (2001) for the reliefs.

rifice attest that, still at the end of the 5th c., the owners of the house worshipped the old gods. The sacrifice itself could be evidence for a magical ritual, including the magical number seven that could refer to the number of the participants in the ritual with the sacrifice.

The evidence of *defixiones*, voodoo dolls and execration magic in Egypt, incantation bowls in Syria and Mesopotamia, the cave sanctuaries and houses of Attica and the widespread use of amulets and magical papyri all attest to the continued presence of magic and the vigour of syncretic religious culture in the East in Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine period. The situation in southern Greece seems to have changed after the closing of the Neoplatonic School in Athens in 529 and the persecutions of Justinian, which seem to have ended the activities in the cave sanctuaries. In other areas of the eastern Mediterranean and in rural communities, especially in Egypt, magical practices have survived until modern times.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. A selection of *charakteres* used in *defixiones* and other tablets in the Mediterranean region.
Fig. 2. Cock-headed anguipede, a magical divinity that appears in *defixiones* and amulets.
Fig. 3. A Syriac bowl from the 7th c. A.D., with a magic text in Eastern Aramaic Koiné. Courtesy National Museum of Finland/Collections of The Museum of Cultures (Inv. no. VK 5738:3).
Fig. 4. Fountain of the Lamps located in the Gymnasium Area north of the theatre at Corinth. (Wiseman (1972), fig. 1; Courtesy of James Wiseman and the Trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens).
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MAGIC IN LATE ANTIQUITY: THE EVIDENCE OF MAGICAL GEMS

Carla Sfameni

Abstract

This article examines the main problems related to the so-called magical gems (semiprecious stones engraved with images of various deities or demons and characterised by the presence of symbols and inscriptions) in order to illustrate the contribution that this kind of archaeological material can make to our knowledge of magic and popular beliefs in Late Antiquity. Magical gems reflect a complex ideology, closely linked to ritual activities performed in order to achieve a number of different purposes (divination, protection against dangers, health, love, success and wealth). These aims were sought by invoking superhuman power by means of the images represented and of the formulas inscribed on the gems. Due to the complex problems raised by this kind of archaeological material, it will be necessary to limit the discussion to the analysis of some relevant examples from the available evidence.

Introduction

Magical gems are semiprecious stones engraved with images of various deities or demons. The powers depicted usually appear in their traditional Graeco-Roman and Egyptian forms, but sometimes there are new types, monstrous combinations of human and animal elements. Many of the figures have no connection with magic in themselves but are applied to magical use either by being inscribed with magical words or formulas or by being combined with solar and cosmic symbols.

Interest in magical gems is not very widespread among scholars of Classical Antiquity. First of all, magical gems have little artistic value because the images are often crudely executed. Classical archaeologists generally are not very interested in this kind of material because the inscriptions require a specific epigraphic and linguistic competence. Egyptologists have largely neglected these objects because they belong

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to a very late period and to Hellenistic culture, while historians of religion only recently have started to use systematically this kind of evidence to illustrate religious beliefs in Late Antiquity. Gems are also neglected due to their dispersal amongst many museums, and the collections of magical gems are in any case only rarely on display. Finally, as it is very difficult to interpret this type of object, so it is necessary to work in teams and use the different methodologies of the individual disciplines to fully assess their significance.

The primary aim of this paper is to show the important contribution that the study of magical gems in connection with the texts known as Magical Papyri can make to our knowledge of magical theories and practices in Late Antiquity.

A Brief History of Research into Magical Gems

In the 17th and 18th c. several works were produced in which collections of gems were discussed.[1] The authors of these works described as 'Gnostic' or '*Abrasax*' gems which bore names or inscriptions or astral symbols.[2] The definition of these gems as 'Gnostic' depended on the fact that at that time scholars considered 'Gnostics' to be like heretics, devoted to secret and magic activities.[3] Furthermore, according to Irenaeus and Hippolytus, the Gnostic Basilides counted 365 heavens, whose archon was called *Abrasax*: this name corresponds to the number 365 which also refers to the days of the year.[4] This name is often inscribed on the gems. Macarius and Chiflet who wrote essays on magical gems in the 17th c. believed that gems with the name '*Abrasax*' were created by members of Gnostic sects.[5] In 1911, De Ridder defined this kind of gem as 'magic'.[6] A few years later, in 1914, A. Delatte, when publishing the catalogue of the collections of the National Museum in Athens, rejected the name 'Gnostic' for these

[1] Gorlaeus (1707); Maffei (1707); Mariette (1732–1737). For a synthesis of the earliest research on magical gems see Zwierlein-Diehl (1991) 12–15 and Mastrocinque (2003A) 127–36.

[2] Du Molinet (1692).

[3] Capello (1702) stressed the Gnostic interpretation and this theory was universally accepted in the following century, especially by Matter (1828) and King (1887).

[4] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.24.7; Hippol. *Haer.* 7.26.6.

[5] Macarius (1657).

[6] De Ridder (1911).

gems and proved that they were simply magical amulets.[7] Nowadays scholars believe that, even if it is possible that some Gnostic ideas and practices could have influenced the manufacture of magical amulets, it is not correct to attribute the production of this kind of object exclusively or mainly to a Gnostic milieu.[8]

The most important modern studies on magical gems are those of C. Bonner[9] and of A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain.[10] C. Bonner wrote the first systematic study of the gems and gave them the definition of 'magical amulets'. According to this scholar, Gnosticism was only one of the many religious traditions that contributed to the creation of magical gems.[11] A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain attributed these objects to the magical world in which they noted different religious traditions but a coherent doctrine.[12] They classified the gems on the basis of the types represented, whereas Bonner distinguished the specimens mainly by their function. Later many catalogues of collections were published, together with a number of studies on single specimens or groups of objects.[13] The *Sylloge Gemmarum Gnosticarum*, recently edited by A. Mastrocinque, has assembled many specimens published in the works of the 17th and 18th c., using an interdisciplinary method to analyze this kind of object.[14]

Magic and Religion

In the Graeco-Roman world the words *magus, magia* and other similar terms often had a negative meaning and were associated with antisocial activities.[15] Greeks and Romans believed that magic had the power to alter the regular course of nature, and due to this opinion

[7] Delatte (1914).

[8] Sfameni Gasparro (2003). On Gnosticism see Bianchi (1967); Ries, Janssens and Sevrin (1982); on Gnosticism and magic: Sfameni Gasparro (2000); Mastrocinque (2005).

[9] Bonner (1950), (1951) and (1954).

[10] Delatte and Derchain (1964).

[11] Bonner (1950) in particular 22–44.

[12] Delatte and Derchain (1964).

[13] See: A*GDS* I–IV; Pannuti (1983); Philipp (1986); Zwierlein-Diehl (1991); Henig (1994); Michel (2001); Mastrocinque (2002).

[14] Mastrocinque (2003B).

[15] See Graf (1995); Graf (2000); Dickie (2001) 12–17. A synthesis of elements in Greek and Roman magic can be found in Moreau (2000).

magic was often condemned by laws.[16] The Greek term *mageia* comes from a word used to indicate a Persian priest (*magos*); so it is possible that the negative meaning of the word depends on the hostile attitude of Greek writers towards the Persian people.[17] This may also explain why the accusation of 'magic' was at times used to attack enemies or in reference to foreign religious rituals,[18] and ancient writers viewed the nature of *mageia* as a distinctive category in Greek and Roman thinking.[19]

There are several different theories of magic in ancient Greek and Roman writing.[20] For example, Origen (184–253) wrote: 'So-called magic is not, as the followers of Epicurus and Aristotle think, utterly incoherent, but, as the experts in these things prove, is a consistent system, which has principles known to very few'.[21] Apuleius (*ca.* 125–*ca.* 180) divided magical practices into good and evil, and good magic is also divided into popular and philosophical magic.[22] The concept of philosophical magic depended on the theory of a finite cosmos in which all elements are related to one another through a cosmic sympathy.[23]

The question of possible differences among various kinds of magic is only one aspect of the more complex problem of the definition of magic itself. Modern scholars continue to debate the relationship between magic and religion, but no definition is universally accepted.[24] Some scholars have asserted that magic is easily separable from religion: Frazer saw it as a vestige of an early stage of religious development,[25] Barb as a decayed form of religion.[26] More recent studies

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[16] See Lugli (1989) 34–35 for the Roman laws against magical practices.

[17] On the Persian *magoi* as priests see Herod. 1.40, 101, 107ff., 120, 128; 7.19, 37, 43, 113f.; Xen. *Cyr. 8.1.*23; Cic. *Div.* 1.23 and 41. On the origin of the term *magos*, see Graf (1995) 21–58 and Bremmer (1999).

[18] Graf (1995) 29.

[19] Dickie (2001).

[20] See Graf (2002) for a useful synthesis on the main theories of magic in Antiquity.

[21] Origen *C. Cels* 1.24 (transl. Chadwick (1965)).

[22] Apul. *Apol.* 9.42 and 61–63.

[23] Plotinus *Enn.* 4.4.40. See Braarving (1999) 46–51 about theurgy.

[24] For a bibliographic synthesis on ancient magic see Fowler (2005). Main studies on magic: Faraone and Obbink (1991); Graf (1995); Meyer and Mirecki (1995); Schäfer and Kippenberg (1997); Braaving (1999); Asirvatham, Ondine Pache and Watrous (2001); Dickie (2001); Meyer and Mirecki (2002); Sfameni Gasparro (2003); Martin (2005).

[25] Frazer (1900) vol. 1, 62–78.

[26] Barb (1968) 114.

have modified these opinions and nowadays the most widely accepted theory is that the categories of magic and religion are indivisible but different, and many scholars do not agree on the existence of a contrast between magic and religion.[27] The problem is too complex to be fully discussed here, neither is it possible to examine all the modern theories put forward by historians of religions and anthropologists on this matter.[28] Nevertheless, it is important to stress some points of the current theoretical debate.[29] It is difficult to give a clear definition of magic because there was no single ancient view of magic and the concept of magic itself changed in different contexts and periods.[30] Magic and religion belong to the same cultural and religious context and are closely linked, because they are two co-existent ways to create communication between the human and the divine worlds.[31] Yet some important differences existed and were stressed by the ancient writers themselves.[32] Nowadays many scholars refuse to theorise about magic, even in books specifically dedicated to ancient magic, while they prefer to examine specific materials. For example, this is the case of two works on ancient magic published in 2001. N. Janowitz, in the preface of her *Magic in the Roman World*, asserts that magic is "not a coherent topic"[33] and this is the reason why she prefers not to offer a clear definition of magic itself, but only a brief survey of the theories of other scholars.[34] M. Dickie in his interesting book about people who practiced magic from the 5th c. B.C. to the 7th c. A.D. has collected and analyzed a large number of ancient sources. At the beginning of his work, in chapter 1, the scholar admits that it is very difficult to define the notion of magic, examining some theories of historians and anthropologists.[35] More recently, S. Johnston, reviewing Janowitz's

[27] Blythin (1970) 45–50; Versnel (1991) 177–97; García Teijero (1993) 123–28; Bremmer (1999) 1–12.

[28] For example see: Aune (1980) 1507–57; Faraone and Obbink (1991); Graf (1995); Luck (1997); Schäfer and Kippenberg (1997); Flint, Gordon, Luck and Ogden (1999); Sfameni Gasparro (2002) and (2003).

[29] For the main modern theories of religion and anthropology on ancient magic see Aune (1980) 1507–57; Segal (1981); Faraone and Obbink (1991); Graf (1995); Luck (1995); Schäfer and Kippenberg (1997); Flint, Gordon, Luck and Ogden (1999).

[30] See in particular Segal (1981) 351 and Gordon (1999).

[31] Blythin (1970) 59.

[32] Luck (1995).

[33] Janowitz (2001) ix.

[34] Janowitz (2001) 2–6.

[35] Dickie (2001) 18–27.

and Dickie's books and a work by D. Ogden on Greek and Roman necromancy,[36] has presented some incisive reflections about the current debate on ancient magic. Johnston stresses that: "It is the nature of scholarship to impose order, which means imposing and then defining categories… We need definitions of magic, at least for heuristic purposes".[37]

Even if it is not easy at all, it is necessary to define the phenomenon of ancient magic in order to be able to discuss theories and ideas with other scholars referring to the same categories. It is generally admitted that magic has some specific qualities. First of all, the most peculiar feature of magic is the strong power that the magician claims to hold over the divine world: he threatens and blackmails the gods, whereas the religious man is reverent towards the gods. Moreover, magic rituals are performed in a private context (the magician and his 'client'), whereas traditional religious activities have a mainly communal character. Magic is also characterised by an aggressive component, absent or present only in rare situations in religious activities.

There were many different kinds of magical practices in Antiquity (exorcism, alchemy, love rites and so on); in particular, in the late antique period, we are well informed about magic by a series of important documents, like *defixiones* and, above all, papyri and gems.[38]

The Magical Gems

Gems as Amulets in Classical and Late Antiquity

An amulet is an object meant to protect the person who wears it against ills. It is also believed to have the power to produce a positive effect or to obey the will of the wearer. Ancient people used different kinds of materials to create amulets: papyri, tissues, leaves, lead tablets. In particular, sheets of lead with inscriptions, called *defixiones*, were very commonly used from the 5th c. B.C. to the 6th c. A.D.: they were intended to influence the actions of people against their will.[39]

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[36] Ogden (2001).
[37] Johnston (2003).
[38] See Sfameni (2009).
[39] Edition: Audollent (1904). See also Jordan (1985); Gager (1992); Ogden (1999).

Since very ancient times and in many different cultural contexts, stones were used as amulets because they were believed to possess a quality to protect the wearer against dangers and diseases, and to give him some advantage. The elder Pliny (A.D. 23/4–79) gives us some useful information about stones used as amulets, the prehistoric axes used by magicians,[40] but from other sources we know that there were many kinds of magical stones, like those with a particular shape or stones fallen from the sky that had the power to shake off fetters or cast out demons.[41] It is also known that the *theurgi* used carved stones to make prophetic statues of deities.[42]

If people believed that special kinds of stones possessed specific powers, at a certain moment they thought that this power could be strengthened by carving an image or inscribing names and formulas on them. Pliny refers to the magical power of gemstones in many passages of his work. For example he wrote:

> Now I shall discuss those kinds of gemstones that are acknowledged as such, beginning with the finest. And this shall not be my only aim, but to the greater profit of mankind I shall incidentally confute the abominable falsehoods of the Magi, since in very many of their statements about gems they have gone far beyond providing an alluring substitute for medical science into the realms of the supernatural.[43]

Pliny's contempt for the superstitious belief in the magical power of gemstones is also shown in the following passage:

> There are many more stones that are even more magical, and these have received foreign names from men who have thus betrayed the fact that they are ordinary, worthless stones, and not precious stones at all. But I shall here remain content with having exposed the abominable falsehoods of the Magi.[44]

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[40] Plin. *HN* 37.135; 30.14. Cf. Mastrocinque (1998), cap.V.

[41] See Mastrocinque (2003A) 53: *Orphei Lithikà* 360–87; *Orphei lithikà kerygmata* 16.5 (ed. Halleux and Schamp (1985) 101–103 and 157); *PGM* 12.279 ss.

[42] *Corpus Hermeticum*, *Asclepius* 3.24; 37–38; *PGM* 4.3142.

[43] Plin. *HN* 37.54: '*Nunc gemmarum confessa genera dicemus ab laudatissimis orsi, nec vero id solum agemus, sed etiam maiore utilitate vitae obiter coarguemus. Magorum infandam vanitatem, quando vel plurima illi prodidere de gemmis ab medicinae blandissima specie ad prodiga transgressi*'. Transl. Eichholz (1962) 205. See also *HN* 37.118–123/24; 192.

[44] Plin. *HN* 37.193: '*Sunt et multo plures magisque monstrificae quibus Barbara dedere nomina confessi lapides esse, non gemmas. Nobis satis erit in his coarguisse dira mendacia Magorum*'.

It was in the time of the elder Pliny in the 1st c. A.D. that magical gems worn as amulets appear to have become widespread. According to Pliny, 'Nowadays even men are beginning to wear on their fingers a representation of Harpocrates and figures of Egyptian deities'.[45]

The majority of the surviving magical gems date from the imperial period (2nd–4th c.) but they remained widely diffused across the empire until at least the 5th or 6th c.[46] It is impossible in this short paper to discuss the date of every single gem discussed here, and the precise chronology of individual specimens is frequently difficult to establish, due to the crude execution of the gems and to the similar characteristics shared by gems from different periods. However, some pieces can be dated by the style and technique of their inscriptions, which often display lettering of a kind known from the 2nd–3rd c. onwards.[47] Some specimens also present a strong link with documents that can be placed with certainty between the 3rd and 5th c., in particular the magical papyri.

Production and Provenance

Most magical gems are stones carved on one or both sides, made to be set in rings or necklaces.[48] On the gems we generally find figures of various deities. Spells are usually joined to the images, but on many specimens the inscription is on its own. The text is generally written in Greek characters but there are also Egyptian, Hebrew or Aramaic words and sometimes incomprehensible combinations of letters and symbols, the so called *voces magicae* and *charakteres*. *Charakter* is the term used to indicate the small designs and figures found on magical papyri and gems that have no apparent source in any known alphabet but that have a meaning in their sequence.[49] The *voces magicae* are foreign or strange-sounding words that Greeks called *Ephesia grammata*. They

[45] Plin. *HN* 33.41: '*Iam vero etiam Harpocratem, statuas Aegyptiorum numinum in digitis viri quoque portare incipient*'.

[46] For further information see the catalogues of gems dated on the basis of stylistic and epigraphic criteria in A*GDS* I–IV; Pannuti (1983); Philipp (1986); Zwierlein-Diehl (1991); Michel (2001).

[47] Bonner (1950) 13.

[48] Cf. the snake-legged god with the cock's head on a gold necklace found in a grave at Polistis Chrysochou, in Cyprus (2nd–3rd c. A.D.): Pierides (1971) 48–49, tav. 33.

[49] For the magical use of written words and *charakteres* see Frankfurter (1994).

are in evidence already in Assyrian and Egyptian magic from the 2nd millennium B.C.[50] Names and epithets of deities are generally found in the vocative case; there are also acclamations.[51]

Magical gems were usually consecrated by priests or magicians using specific rites.[52] It is very difficult to distinguish a 'magical' gem from another gem used only for 'devotional' purposes, "car le propre de la magie est de pouvoir transformer un object ordinaire en object magique, comme l'atteste l'histoire de la lampe d'Aladin".[53] The papyri confirm that some gems with images of deities without any magical signs (inscriptions, symbols, characters etc.) were used for magical purposes.[54]

The provenance of the surviving magical gems is known in very few instances because gems found in regular excavations are very rare.[55] The great number of pieces attests to a wide distribution of this kind of material. Some scholars suggest that the gems were spread through the Roman empire by Roman legionaries.[56] In any case, it is certain that gems were carried to locations very far from the places where they were produced. It is also certain that modern collectors contributed to their dispersal. A. Delatte and Ph. Derchain observe that:

> malgré cette énorme dispersion, l'unité de doctrine, de facture plus ou moins habile, et la ressemblance générale avec la doctrine des papyrus découverts en Egypte inclinent à croire que nous nous trouvons dans la plupart des cas devant des produits de l'industrie égyptienne et plus précisément alexandrine.[57]

The central role of Alexandria in the production of magical gems is generally accepted because in this city, more than anywhere else, different ethnic communities (Egyptian, Greek, Roman) co-habited and there was an active Judaic group.[58] The Jews, in particular, were the largest foreign population in Alexandria and their monotheism with its

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[50] For the main interpretations of the *voces magicae*, see Ritner (1995) 3429–38.
[51] Bonner (1950) 167–207.
[52] Cf. *PGM* 4.1617ss.; 1716ss.; 1743s.; 12.16ss.; 201ss.; 7.579ss.; Festugière (1951) 82–83.
[53] Nagy (2002) 156.
[54] *PGM* 5.447–58: gemstone with the image of Sarapis used for divinatory dreams.
[55] Bonner (1950) 251.
[56] Neverov (1998).
[57] Delatte and Derchain (1964) 15.
[58] Delatte and Derchain (1964) 15; Barb (1968) 130.

peculiar and exclusive character set them apart from the other local communities. On the other hand, according to M. Smith, the role of Alexandria in the production of magical gems may have been exaggerated: if it is true that most of the words inscribed on these objects are Hebrew, there is no reason why gems could not have been produced in Palestine, Syria, and even Rome rather than in Alexandria.[59] Unfortunately the lack of archaeological evidence does not allow us to confirm either of these hypotheses. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that Egypt was a highly multicultural society in Late Antiquity and religion was the main area of contact between Egyptians, Greeks, Jews and even Christians.[60] D. Frankfurter has reconstructed the situation under the Roman administration in Egypt. As the economic position of Egyptian temples came under threat, the priests adopted different strategies to deal with the situation. Some of them were able to exercise their power in the local communities, thanks to their control of texts belonging to the temple tradition. Those priests could be the authors of the magical papyri.[61] Gems are so closely linked to the magical papyri, as I will try to show in the next paragraphs, that the hypothesis of an Egyptian origin for the production of magical gems seems quite probable. This does not mean, of course, that the gems could not also be made in many different regions of the Roman empire. Yet H. Philipp has pointed out how few gems have been found in the western regions of the empire. In the collection in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn, for example, only two gems that have a German provenance are magical.[62]

The gems generally have an oval shape, while other shapes are rare; they are completely similar in form to the shapes used for non-magical gems.[63] The commonest stones used for magical gems are different qualities of jasper (green, red, yellow), agate, haematite, chalcedony, lapis lazuli, rock-crystal, carnelian, obsidian and steatite. The different kinds of stones are sometimes associated with specific figures.[64]

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[59] Smith (1967).
[60] Bagnall (1993), in particular 261–310.
[61] Frankfurter (1998) 198–233.
[62] Philipp (1986) 9.
[63] Bonner (1950) 13.
[64] Bonner (1950) 9: for example green jasper is often used for amulets with the image of the snake-legged god with a cock's head, red jasper for many Egyptians gods, yellow jasper and haematite for the 'uterine' gems. However, these associations are never universal or consistent.

Fig. 1 The snake-legged god with a cock's head (after *SGG* 284, n. 225).

Typology

The gems can be classified by type[65] or by function.[66]

It is not easy to define the typology of the main subjects represented on magical gems: we can choose the particular religious tradition represented, isolate the most significant figures, or select the types on the basis of the function of the figures depicted.

While most of the figures belong to the traditional religious pantheons (Graeco-Roman, Egyptian etc.), and their magical use is testified by the presence of inscriptions, spells, names or symbols and characters, there are some representations of deities which specifically belong to the world of magic. The most famous and mysterious is the snake-legged god with a cock's head: it is one of the most common monstrous figures represented on magical gems (Fig. 1).[67] The monster faces front, the head is usually turned to the right or sometimes to the left. The arms and the trunk are human, the right hand usually holds a whip and the left arm carries a round shield. A military kilt covers the area joining the trunk to the legs, which are serpents. The serpent

[65] See, for example, Delatte and Derchain (1964).
[66] This is the system adopted by Bonner (1950).
[67] Bonner (1950) 123–39.

legs clearly derive from the Greek tradition of the giants, but it is difficult to understand the origin and the meaning of the cock's head; the connection between snake and cock has no comparison elsewhere. It is possible to suppose an influence from Persia and Syria, but while there are many hypotheses and explanations no one is certain.[68] The solar nature of the subject is commonly recognised. This particular type has often been regarded as Gnostic because the name *Abrasax* occurs on many specimens. However, this name is also associated with many other types and it can be regarded as a word of power rather than a proper name. According to many scholars the actual name of this figure is *Iao* because this name is inscribed on the god's shield on most of the specimens. Nevertheless, like *Abrasax*, the name *Iao* is inscribed on a number of gems in connection with many different types.

There are many figures partly human and partly animal. Many deities with a human body and an animal's head were familiar to Egyptians but monstrous to Greeks and Romans. The most common such subject is the so-called *Pantheos* or *Bes Pantheos* (Fig. 2). This figure was known from the Pharaonic period.[69] On the gems the god is represented facing front, naked and often ithiphallic; two pairs of wings extend outwards from his shoulders, he has a long tail, four arms holding different objects and he often stands on an *ouroboros* containing animals, *charakteres* or names. He is a cosmic and pantheistic god with solar connections.[70]

Egyptian deities are very often represented on magical gems: in particular Isis, Osiris, Sarapis, Horus-Harpokrates and Anubis but also Thoth, cynocephali, leontocephali, other figures with animal heads, scarabs and, less often, Seth, Apis or other gods.[71] One of the most interesting figures is the image of Harpokrates on a lotus flower, called by Bonner 'the young sun' (Fig. 3).[72] It represents a naked child with a finger on his mouth seated on a lotus flower, in a boat, or on a lotus

[68] For a recent synthesis and discussion of the main hypothesis see Cosentino (2003).

[69] Ciampini, Sfameni and Lancellotti (2003) 227–29.

[70] Bonner (1950) 156–60; Delatte and Derchain (1964) 126–41; Malaise (1990) 680–729; Ciampini, Sfameni and Lancellotti (2003) 229–34. Late antique examples of this figure on gems include: Philipp (1986) n. 179 (3rd–4th c.); *AGDS* III, nn. 176–177 (4th–5th c.); *AGDS* IV, n. 76 (4th c.).

[71] See Sfameni (2002), (2003) and (2004).

[72] Bonner (1950) 140. See for example, *AGDS* III, nn.147–148–149 (3rd c. A.D.); 150–151 (2nd–4th c.); 152 (4th–5th c.).

Fig. 2 Bes Pantheos (after *SGG* 235, n. 138).

Fig. 3 Harpokrates seated on lotus flower (after *SGG* 169, n. 29).

flower placed in the middle of the boat. Around him there are often groups of wild animals, arranged in threes; very frequent too is the connection with a baboon represented in adoration.[73] This figure has a solar nature and a protective function.

On many gems typical Graeco-Roman deities are represented that have no connection in themselves with magic. They are applied to magical use by being inscribed with magical words or formulas or by being combined with magical types (for example the cock's head god with snake legs).[74] Representations of gods from the Near East or of different subjects are more rare.[75]

Another group is represented by gems with astrological figures or symbols. It is a very complex group because astrological symbols are used in association with many different subjects to strengthen the magical power of the iconography.[76]

Gems that can be classed with certainty as Gnostic are extremely rare. The obverse of one green jasper amulet shows a lion-headed male figure dressed in an Egyptian loincloth and holding in his right hand a *situla*; in his left hand he grasps a tall staff. To the right and the left of the figure are inscribed the names *Ariel Ialdabaoth*; on the reverse are inscribed the following names *Ia Iao Sabaoth Adonai Eloai Oreos Astapheos*. It is possible to compare this list of names to the series of Gnostic Archons present in the Ophite's system.[77] Origen claims that the Gnostic Archon *Ialdabaoth* could be represented as a lion,[78] and so on this gem the name *Ialdabaoth* attests to the use of the typical Egyptian iconography of the god with a lion's head, a manifestation of the sun god Horus, in a Gnostic context.[79]

A magical papyrus (4th c.) describes how to make a gem using the representation of a lion-headed figure, called *Helioros*:[80]

> The traditional rite [for acquiring an assistant] … You should pick up this stone; carve it at once [and engrave it later]. Once it has been engraved, bore a hole in it, pass a thread through and wear it around your neck.

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[73] See Monaca and Sfameni (2003).
[74] Bonner (1950) 148–55.
[75] For Mithras, in particular, see Mastrocinque (1998).
[76] Lancellotti (2003). On astrology and magic see in particular Gordon (1997B).
[77] Nag Hammadi Codex 2.2–7 (ed. Layton (1989) 37, § 16. See also Origen *C.Cels.* 6.24–38; in part. 30–32).
[78] Origen *C.Cels.* 6.31. See Jackson (1985) 21–26.
[79] Bonner (1949) 45; Jackson (1985) 111–15.
[80] *PGM* 1.68 = Betz (1992) 5.

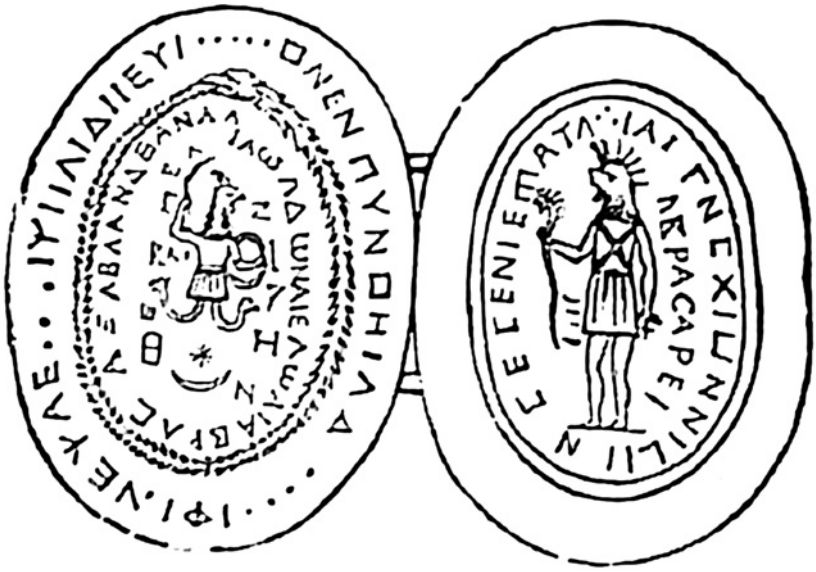

Fig. 4 Lion headed god (Helioros) (after *SGG* 266, n. 191).

> And engraved on the stone is Helioros as a lion-faced figure, holding in the left hand a celestial globe and a whip, and around him in a circle is a serpent biting its tail. And on the exergue of the stone is this name (conceal it): "ACHA ACHACHA CHACH CHARCHARA CHACH". And after passing an Anubian string through it wear it around your neck.[81]

This text demonstrates the popularity of this image without any reference to a Gnostic tradition. Some gems likewise present a male figure with a lion's head (Fig. 4).[82]

Some gems also show a Christian subject or names, often associated with different typologies.[83]

In conclusion, the figures represented on magical gems are characterised by a concentration of different divine attributes. The solar subjects are the most represented, but almost every picture has many astrological and solar symbols too.

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[81] *PGM* 1.144 = Betz (1992) 5.

[82] Cf. *AGDS* III, n. 177 (4th c.).

[83] For example, see Sfameni (2003) 158: Harpokrates on the lotus flower is associated with the names IESUS and CHRISTOS. See also Lancellotti and Sanzi (2003).

Use

The lack of archaeological contexts makes it extremely difficult to assess the use of magical gems in Late Antiquity solely from the evidence of those examples that survive. Nevertheless, literary sources give us important indications of the main functions of the gems, and a number of those sources date precisely to the late antique period. In particular the magical papyri, which are discussed further below, are dated chiefly to the 4th and 5th c. A.D. and are a crucial source for the use of magical gems. According to the papyri, magical gems were intended above all to obtain personal benefits for their owners from the deities: success, victory, favour and health were particularly requested. Many gems were used for divinatory purposes,[84] to turn away the evil eye, to throw out demons, to gain love,[85] induce sleep or to prevent it.

Gemstones with magical or medical power are named in many ancient texts, including the *Lapidari (Lithika)*, and medical works.[86] The *Lapidari* are written sources describing the characteristics and powers of stones, and although they originated in the late Hellenistic period they continued to be read and revised down to the 7th c. A.D., attesting to the ongoing interest in such writings throughout Late Antiquity.[87] In these mineralogic works there are often indications of gems representing various deities, like Jupiter, Sol, Sol and Luna, Poseidon, Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, Venus, Isis, Hecate, Fides Publica, Ops and Chnoubis, and also references to gorgoneion, scarabs, and many animals, symbols, charakteres and *voces magicae*.[88] The astrological *lapidari* are a very interesting category because they are founded on the theory that the stones are under astral influence.[89] The stars also control the different parts of the human body, and so the *iatromathematica* used astral plans and stones in medical treatments.[90] The influence of a stone was believed to be more effective if a figure corresponding to the relevant star was carved on it: it is said that

[84] Bibliography in Monaca (2002). On divination in magical papyri see in particular Gordon (1997A).
[85] On love magic, in particular, see Faraone (2001).
[86] See Sfameni Gasparro (2003) 23.
[87] Hopfner (1926); Hünemörder (1999).
[88] Repertory by Nagy (2002) 170–76.
[89] Bouché Leclercq (1879–1882) 311–19; Halleux-Schamp (1985) XXVIII.
[90] Lancellotti (2001); Lancellotti (2000).

Fig. 5 Chnoubis (after *SGG* 249, n. 158).

the astrologue Teucrus of Babilonia advised carving the images of the decans on stones.[91] Many other texts also refer to gems and decans, the sideral gods that dominate the 10 degrees of the Zodiac.[92] The *Sacred Book of Hermes to Asklepius* (4th–5th c. A.D.) indicates the name and the figure of each decan, the part of the body and the illness over which he exercises his power, the stones or the plan that are useful to wear and the food to avoid.[93]

To give just one example, the image of the snake with a lion's head, called Chnoumis or Chnoubis (Fig. 5), was used to recover from stomach ache as Galen (late 2nd c.) attests:

> The testimony of some authorities attribute to certain stones a peculiar quality which is actually possessed by the green jasper. Worn as an amulet, it benefits the stomach and the oesophagus. Some also set it in a ring, and engrave on it the radiate serpent, just as king Nechepsos prescribed in his fourteenth book.[94]

The snake with a lion's head, Chnoumis, is a typical magical subject. Its name derives from the ancient Egyptian god Khnoum, identified

[91] See Festugiére (1950) vol. 1, 139, n. 2.
[92] For a figurative representation of the decans see the tablets of Grand (Abry 1993).
[93] Ruelle (1908).
[94] Gal. *De simpl.* 10.19. Bonner (1950) 54–56.

with Ammon-Ra.[95] The snake is radiate and it has a clearly solar character.[96] There are also many sources that attest that Chnoubis was also a decan:

> The decan has the name Chnoumos. Its shape comprises the face of a lion with solar rays, and its whole body is that of a serpent, coiling (*v. l.* fiery-looking), standing erect. It rules diseases which afflict the area of the earth. Engrave this decan on an agate stone, set it in whatever setting you choose with (a piece of) the "lion-foot" plant underneath it, and wear it while abstaining from hens' (?) eggs.[97]

The figure is very complex and has astrological and medical values and solar connections.[98] Alexander of Tralles (6th c.) prescribed an amulet representing Herakles strangling a lion as a cure against colic: 'On a Median stone engrave Herakles standing upright and throttling a lion; set it in a gold ring and give it to the patient to wear'.[99] Formulas to turn away illness were particularly used. For example, the image of Ares with the inscription: 'Are you thirsty, Tantal? Drink blood!' was used to recover from hemorrhage.[100]

In many cases only the iconography allows us to identify the possible uses of the gems. A number of images were used for specific medical problems: Eolo against meteorism and colic,[101] Ares to protect the liver,[102] Perseus with the Gorgon's head to cure gout.[103] The reaper was a subject used against sciatica.[104]

A well defined class of magical gems is represented by emathite stones[105] with the representation of a womb closed by a key; on the womb there are many Egyptian deities, Chnoubis, Isis, Harpokrates, Osiris, Anubis (Fig. 6). These amulets were used to favour or to avoid a pregnancy.[106]

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[95] Delatte (1914) 69.
[96] A. Kiss, s.v. *Chnoubis*, in *LIMC* III.
[97] *Sacred Book of Hermes to Asklepius*: ed. Ruelle (1908) 260; transl. Jackson (1985) 82.
[98] See Sanzi (2003).
[99] Alexander of Tralles 2.377; see also Bonner (1950) 63.
[100] Delatte Derchain (1964) 258–59, n. 364.
[101] Bonner (1950) 64–66.
[102] Bonner (1950) 66.
[103] Neverov (1976) n. 143a.
[104] Bonner (1950) 71–77.
[105] Other stones exist, in particular yellow jasper.
[106] Cf. Delatte (1914) 75–88; Barb (1953); Aubert (1989); Aloe Spada (2003).

Fig. 6 Uterine gem (after *SGG* 405, n. 374).

The images of some animals were used to protect the health of the wearer: for example the lizard[107] or the ibis.[108]

Amulets were also intended to protect against negative influences and unknown dangers that could cause death.[109] Gems used for 'black' magic practices are rare, but it is possible to distinguish the general category of 'aggressive magic' including all the objects intended to control the will and the acts of other people.[110]

The Magical Papyri

The magical papyri are a group of texts from Egypt written in Greek from the early Hellenistic period to Late Antiquity, but the majority of them belong in the period from the 3rd to the 5th c. A.D.[111] Among 130 papyri translated by H. D. Betz, only about ten can be dated to

[107] Bonner (1950) 69–71.
[108] Barb (1972) 357–62.
[109] Bonner (1950) 95–102.
[110] Bonner (1950) 103–22.
[111] The oldest papyrus (XL) can be dated to the Hellenistic period, after Alexander's death. A history of studies on the magical papyri with bibliography can be found in Brashear (1995) 3380–3684.

the 1st and 2nd c. A.D., while some are dated to the 2nd–3rd c., and the majority to the 4th and some also to the 5th and 6th c.[112] Some of the papyri are also written in Egyptian Demotic or Coptic. They include all sorts of ancient magic (love magic, apothropaic magic, revelatory magic, exorcism and so on) and they have been considered a kind of handbook for magicians. The first magical papyri were brought from Egypt to Europe in the 19th c. by Johann d'Anastasi, a Swedish diplomat stationed in Cairo from 1828 to 1859, who acquired a collection of papyri probably discovered in a grave in Thebes. These documents and the other magical papyri discovered up to about 1930 were published by Karl Preisendanz.[113] He referred to the papyri as 'Greek' (*Papyri Graecae Magicae* or *PGM*) because of their language and especially because he discovered in them theories and customs coming from the ancient Greek cultural and religious tradition. Afterwards these texts were analyzed by Classicists with a few contributions by Egyptologists.[114] During the following years many other papyrological discoveries were made and many other magical texts were published.[115] The English translation edited by H. D. Betz of the Greek texts published by Preisendanz (with a selection of texts published afterwards)[116] together with the associated Demotic texts,[117] excluded by Preisendanz, enabled scholars to become aware of the importance of the Egyptian tradition.[118] However, in this documentation all scholars have noted the presence of elements belonging to several religious traditions and they have sometimes tried to distinguish and isolate them.[119] Some magical papyri have been considered of probable Egyptian origin, while others could have a Greek or Jewish religious background.[120] In

[112] Betz (1992) xxiii–xxviii.
[113] Preisendanz (1973–1974).
[114] Nock (1972) 176–94.
[115] Daniel and Maltomini (1990–1991).
[116] Betz (1992).
[117] Griffiths and Thompson (1904) note that the original source of the Demotic texts was probably Egyptian and Bonner (1950) 22 says: "the magic of the Greek papyri is predominantly Egyptian".
[118] J. H. Johnson in Betz (1992) LV; Ritner (1995) 3371 has particularly stressed the importance of the Egyptian tradition in the writing of magical papyri: "Both Demotic and Greek spells attest to the continuity of Egyptian scriptorium traditions, whether in regard to format, purpose, mythology, incantation or ritual technique".
[119] Scholars have often based themselves on their own field of research (Greek, Egyptian, Jewish etc.) and so have particularly noted the elements related to these traditions.
[120] Festugière (1932) 281–328; Goodenough (1953) II; Smith (1996) 242–66.

particular Jewish elements are very popular. The most invoked deities are *Iao, Sabaoth*, and *Adonai*. The patriarchs of the Old Testament are seen like deities. Angels, archangels and cherubim are often invoked and there are even texts written in Aramaic.[121] In the magical papyri we can also find Mithraic, Persian[122] and Babylonian elements, while typical Latin elements are rare.

According to many scholars, Egyptian magic anticipates much of what can later be found in Graeco-Roman magic.[123] Demotic magic is different from Ancient Egyptian magic: there is an increased use of *voces magicae* and Semitic and Assyrian names such as *Mithras, Ereschigal, Abraham, Adonai, Moses, Sabaoth*.[124]

J. Z. Smith has defined the Magical Papyri as "one of the largest collections of functioning ritual texts, largely in Greek, produced by ritual specialists that has survived from late antiquity".[125] The magical papyri are an inexhaustible repertory of data on faith, religious beliefs and ideology. They are of particular importance because they are first-hand documents written by magicians. In the magical papyri there are many literary elements, like *hymni* and *historiolae*, referring to mythical episodes.[126]

In the Graeco-Roman world magical practices were founded on the philosophical belief that the universe was a *kosmos* in which all the elements were connected to each other by '*sympatheia*'.[127] This is an ancient and well-known theory, supported by Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic philosophers with many variations but resting on a shared belief that all the cosmic elements are linked and each of them influences the others.[128] Iamblichus believed that contact with the divine world could be achieved by a series of ritual practices defined as 'theurgy', a word that means a cultural activity that allows more direct

[121] Brashear (1995) 3428. Many *voces magicae* derive from Hebrew and Aramaic.
[122] *PGM* 4.455–834, 'Mithrasliturgie'; Brashear (1995) 3423–26.
[123] Brashear (1995) 3391. For the relationship between Greek and Egyptian magic, see: Papyrus di Leida J 384 V/4.V/12 and Papyrus of London 46, 240–96, examples that attest that Greek magic depended on Egyptian practice. On Egyptian magic see: Lexa (1925); Sauneron (1951); Kakosy (1985); Roccati and Siliotti (1987); Koening (1994); Pinch (1994); Arslan (1997).
[124] Brashear (1995) 3396.
[125] Smith (1995) 21.
[126] Frankfurter (1995).
[127] Martin (1987) 28.
[128] Luck (1995) 6. See in particular, Plotinus *Enn.* 4.4.40.

contact with the gods and a higher form of knowledge.[129] These ideas were used by magicians to obtain influence and power over natural and supernatural forces and they are well attested in the texts of the magical papyri.[130]

The texts contain above all recipes and instructions for making gems, charms, amulets, figurines and potions. The charms were used to gain friendship, favour, success and victory; there are many formulas requesting a dream oracle, protection against all wild animals, to induce insomnia or for divination; there are also victory charms for the chariot races and love spells.

In conclusion, the spells offer help in the varied situations of daily life, and there are many charms useful for many purposes, like the following (3rd–4th c. A.D.):

> Prayer to Helios: a charm to restrain anger and for victory and for securing favour (none is greater)…I beg you, lord, do not allow me to be overthrown, to be plotted against, to receive dangerous drugs, to go into exile, to fall upon hard times. Rather, I ask to obtain and receive from you life, health, reputation, wealth, influence, strength, success, charm, favour with all men and all women, victory over all men and all women.[131]

The formulae are constructed by elements belonging to many different sources and they are not of an original and homogeneous composition.

In as much as it concerns our subject, the magical papyri give us important references regarding the inscriptions and the formulas on the gems and the iconography of the deities represented on them; they are also particularly important in order to clarify the goals and the modality of the making of the magical gems.[132] The Papyri attest to the existence of ceremonies of consecration before using a stone that was inscribed and carved with the images of deities.

The relation between the papyri and gems has been the subject of some controversy among scholars. According to M. Smith, who analyzed 18 cases of stones used as amulets in the *PGM*, the craftsmen

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[129] Iambl. *Myst.* 5.2.184; 1 9.29–32; 2.95–98. See Luck (1989) 185–228.
[130] Martin (1987) 22–29.
[131] *PGM* 36.211–30 = Betz (1992) 274.
[132] On the relationship between papyri and gems see: Smith (1979) 129–47; Schwartz (1981) 485–509; Sanzi and Sfameni (2009).

who made the gems did not use the papyrus texts.[133] It is said only on nine occasions that gems are to be engraved and some images of deities belonging to the Graeco-Roman pantheon used on the gems are not in themselves magical. However, Nagy and other scholars have argued that the papyri and gems are closely linked,[134] as it is possible to observe analyzing the following 4th c. text:

> Placing (a) ring. A little ring [useful] for every [magical] operation and for success. Kings and governors [try to get it]. Very effective. Taking an air-colored jasper, engrave on it a snake in a circle with its tail in its mouth, and also in the middle of [the circle formed by] the snake [Selene] having two stars on the two horns, and above these, Helios, beside whom ABRASAX should be inscribed; and on the opposite side of the stone from this inscription, the same name ABRASAX, and around the border you will write the great and holy and omnicompetent [spell], the name IAO SABAOTH. And when you have consecrated the stone wear it in a gold ring, when you need it, [provided] you are pure [at that time], and you will succeed in everything you may wish. You are to consecrate the ring together with the stone in the rite used for all [such] objects. A similar engraving in gold, too, is equally effective.[135]

This text provides a very helpful description of a typical gem with the specific ritual of its consecration and a description of its use. Most of the gems we know are engraved with the image of a snake that has 'its tail in its mouth', called the *ouroboros*, that can be alone or associated with other figures or names. It is a subject well known in Egyptian iconography but the main studies on magical gems have not analyzed this subject in depth.[136] The Egyptian *ouroboros* is a symbol of the boundary between the cosmos and chaos.[137] This iconography occurs also on Phoenician objects. In the late 4th c., Macrobius asserts that the Phoenicians considered the *ouroboros* an image of the cosmos.[138] On the late antique gems the *ouroboros* maintains his ancient cosmic character but also assumes new meanings: it is a boundary between the world and the non-world, but it is also a dynamic element that controls the *kosmos*.[139]

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[133] Smith (1979).
[134] Nagy (2002) 177–79.
[135] *PGM* 12.201–69 = Betz (1992) 161.
[136] Bonner (1950) 250.
[137] Kákosy (1986).
[138] Macrob, *Sat.* 1.9.12.
[139] Lancellotti (2002).

A gem of the Aegyptisches Museum in Berlin depicts on the obverse a scarab with a human radiate head inside an *ouroboros*, while on the reverse many names are inscribed (Figs. 7–8). This corresponds closely to the following 4th c. papyrus text:[140]

> A ring. A little ring for success and favour and victory.... Helios is to be engraved on a heliotrope stone as follows: a thick-bodied snake in the shape of a wreath should be [shown] having its tail in its mouth. Inside [the circle formed by] the snake let there be a sacred scarab [beetle surrounded by] rays. On the reverse side of the stone you are to inscribe the name in hieroglyphics, as the prophets pronounce [it]. Then, having consecrated [the ring], wear it when you are pure. The world has had nothing greater than this. For when you have it with you, you will always get whatever you ask from anybody.[141]

PGM 5 (4th c.) offers an interesting example of a gem made for divinatory purposes. It prescribes the method used to engrave an image of Sarapis on agate. The image has no magical character in itself but it is used to propitiate the divinatory dreams of the god.

> On a jasperlike agate engrave Sarapis seated, facing forwards (?), holding an Egyptian royal scepter and on the scepter an ibis, and on the back of the stone the [magical] name [of Sarapis?], and keep it shut up. When need [arises] hold the ring in your left hand, and in your right a spray of olive and laurel [twigs], waving them toward the lamp while saying the spell 7 times. And when you have put [the ring] on the index finger of your left hand with the stone inside, [keep it] thus and, going off [to bed] without speaking to anybody, go to sleep holding the stone to your left ear.[142]

There are many representations of Sarapis without any magical element, probably used for devotional purposes. In same cases, however, the presence of symbols and inscriptions reveal a magical use for the gem (Fig. 9).

We can confirm the link existing between papyri and gems by noting that in the magical papyri there are also recipes or drawings referring to the gods that are well known from the gems. For example, *PGM* 12.121–43 (4th c.) offers a precise description of the *Pantheos*:[143]

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[140] Philipp (1986) 84, n. 118.
[141] *PGM* 12.270–85 = Betz (1992) 163.
[142] *PGM* 5.477–58 = Betz (1992) 109.
[143] Betz (1992) 157–158. See also *PGM* 26.10: a drawing of a god with the head of a bird that can be compared with the god with a cock's head on the gems.

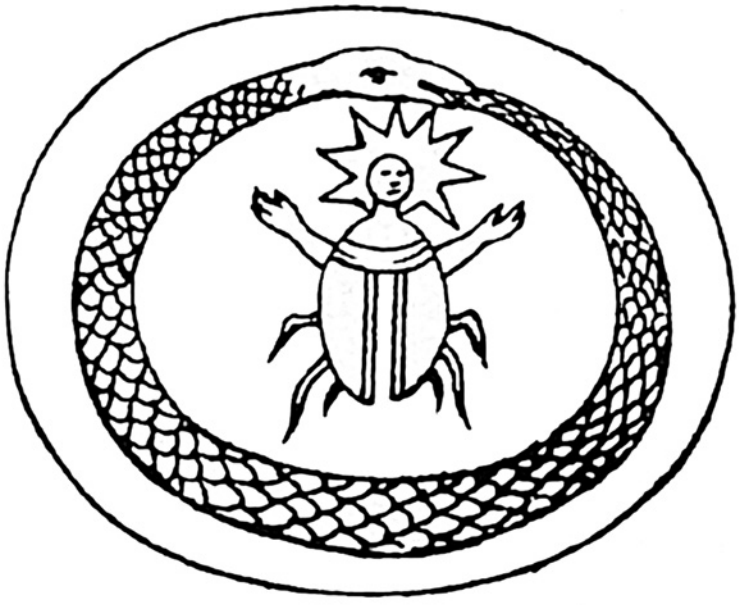

Fig. 7 Scarab (after *SGG* 220, n. 126).

Fig. 8 Plasma gem corresponding to *SGG* 220, n. 126—Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin, inv. 9876 (after *SGG*, tav. 6).

Fig. 9 Sarapis (after *SGG* 181, n. 49).

> Take a clean linen cloth and (according to Ostanes) with myrrh ink draw a figure on it which is humanlike in appearance but has four wings, having the left arm outstretched along with the two left wings, and having the other arm bent with the fist clenched. Then upon the head [draw] a royal headdress and a cloak over its arm, with two spirals on the cloak. Atop the head [draw] bull horns and to the buttocks a bird's tail. Have his right hand held near his stomach and clinched, and on either ankle have a sword extended.

Finally in *PGM* 4.2113 (4th c.) we can find a description of the leontocephalus god:[144]

> And this is the figure written on the hide: A lion-faced form of a man wearing a sash, holding in its right hand a staff, and on it let there be a serpent. And around all his left hand let an asp be entwined, and from the mouth of the lion let fire breathe forth.

[144] Betz (1992) 75.

The Magical Gems and Religious Syncretism in Late Antiquity

The constant association between various pictures of gods belonging to the Graeco-Roman and Egyptian religious traditions, *nomina sacra* like *Iao Sabaoth Abrasax*, and the names of angels, archangels, patriarchs and prophets of the Jewish tradition that we have noticed on the magical gems has been interpreted in many different ways. Some scholars have proposed a Gnostic origin for the amulets, others a Jewish origin,[145] others still an Egyptian or Greek origin.[146] Among some specimens a Mithraic influence has been recognised,[147] a Christian influence has been attributed to others.[148] Nevertheless, the more convincing opinion is that the numerous divine names are engraved on the magical gems in order to give more power to the image of the god represented, perhaps without a link to the specific religious tradition of that divine name.[149]

Writing in the first half of the 3rd c., Origen offers an important aid to understanding this phenomenon:

> On the subject of names I have to say further that experts in the use of charms relate that a man who pronounces a given spell in its native language can bring about the effect that the spell is claimed to do. But if the same spell is translated into any other language whatever, it can be seen to be weak and ineffective.[150]
>
> For example, something of the word Abraham may be translated into Greek, and something is signified by the name Isaac, and there is a meaning in the sound Jacob. If anyone who utters an invocation or oath names "The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" he would effect something, either because of the nature of these names or even because of their power; for daemons are overcome and made subject to him who says these things…We would say the same also of the word Sabaoth, which is frequently used in spells, because if we translate the name into "Lord of the powers" or "Lord of hosts" or Almighty (for its interpreters explain it differently) we would effect nothing; whereas if we keep it with its own sounds, we will cause something

[145] See in particular Goodenough (1953).
[146] For the influence of Egyptian magic see: Hull (1974); Ritner (1995).
[147] Mastrocinque (1998).
[148] For an analysis of the Christian subjects on magical gems see Lancellotti and Sanzi (2003) 309–11.
[149] For the magical use of divine names see: Aune (1980) 1545–47 (magical use of the name of Jesus); Smith (1996) 242–56 and Betz (1995).
[150] Origen *C.Cels.* 1.25: transl. Chadwick (1965) 25.

> to happen, according to the opinion of experts in these matters. We may say the same of Adonai.[151]

A similar doctrine can be found in the *De Mysteriis* of Iamblichus (250–330):[152]

> The translated names do not keep the same meaning, but some linguistic characteristics of one people can't be expressed in the language of another's people; and if it were possible to translate these names, the names would never retain the same power.[153]

This doctrine could explain the presence in the magical texts of many different divine names.[154] It means that the magician used as many names as possible in order to obtain more power.[155] Elements belonging to different religious traditions are so closely connected to each other in all the magical documents that most scholars use the word 'syncretism' to designate this phenomenon.[156] According to this view, the associations of divine names belonging to different religious traditions in our magical evidence must be explained in the wider context of a particular kind of syncretism with henotheistic tendencies.[157] This phenomenon is witnessed by many literary sources; among them, the most important is Macrobius (4th–5th c. A.D.) who examines the gods of the Graeco-Roman pantheon to show that every one is only a manifestation of the supreme solar god:[158] 'I tell you the highest god of all is Iao (called) Hades in winter, Zeus when spring begins, Helios in summer and in autumn splendid Iao'.[159] Apollo/Helios is the Greek god most often invoked in the magical papyri with other astral deities

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[151] Origen *C.Cels.* 5.45: transl. Chadwick (1965) 300. See also: Origen *C.Cels.* 1.24 (20–36); Origen *C.Cels.* 4.35 (transl. Chadwick (1965) 209): 'Their names are so powerful when linked with the name of God that the formula "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" is used not only by members of the Jewish nation in their prayers to God and when they exorcise daemons, but also by almost all those who deal in magic and spells'.

[152] Van Liefferinge (2000).

[153] Iambl. *Myst.* 7.257.10–15; cf. 254.11– 260.

[154] Cf. Betz (1995*)* 153–76.

[155] See n. 148 and also Versnel (2002).

[156] Hull (1974) 27: "The most immediately striking feature of the magic of the period we are considering is its syncretism". See Betz (1991) 248 and Preisendanz (1956) 111–25.

[157] For a synthesis of the current debate on magical syncretism see Sfameni (2001).

[158] Macrob. *Sat* 1.17.4. For the doctrine, see 1.17–24.

[159] Macrob. *Sat.* 1.18.20.

such as Selene and many gods who represent the forces of the universe.[160] The cosmology of the magical papyri attests to the existence of a solar deity that rules the universe, the 'greatest god who exceeds all power'.[161]

P. Lévêque has named this kind of syncretism 'syncretism-henotheism',[162] which apparently emerged in Egypt during the Hellenistic period and then developed during the Roman period: various deities take upon themselves characteristics and specific qualities of many different gods.[163] This is the case, for example, of Isis and Sarapis.[164] Henotheism is a term constructed from the acclamation *eis ho theos* (one is -the- god) which can be found in inscriptions, papyri, gems and in literary texts: "it denotes a personal devotion to one god (there is no other god like this god) without involving rejection or neglect of other gods".[165] In the magical texts the divine names (belonging to different religious traditions) are regarded as multiple manifestations of a unique and higher divine power. The same is the case with the pictures on the gems: various deities which the papyri refer to are here carved in associations with many different divine names. It seems to be a matter of indifference to the magician whether he invokes Graeco-Roman, Egyptian or Jewish gods.[166]

It is impossible to separate the individual components of this kind of syncretism, because they are linked to each other, but this doesn't mean that this syncretism is a 'new religion'.[167] The phenomenon of magical syncretism must be seen in the wider context of Hellenistic religious syncretism because magic shares with religion, philosophy and science a cosmic system of thought and knowledge. Syncretism is not a confused mixture of dissimilar elements; rather it means the use of materials from different cultural contexts that are interpreted in a new and original way. The concentration of various divine powers in the same object created a new cultural and religious product, in the context of an overall view of the cosmos. The notion of syncretism has

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[160] See Fauth (1995) 34–114 (*Der Sonnergott in den griechischen Zauberpapyri*).
[161] *PGM* 12.285 = Betz (1992) 164.
[162] Lévêque (1973) 179–87.
[163] Dunand (1975) and (1999).
[164] Apul. *Met.* 11.5.1: 'Isis is *Numen unicum multiformi specie*'. Merkelbach (1995).
[165] Versnel (1990) 35.
[166] See Betz (1992) XLVI: "The gods from the various cults gradually merged and as their natures became blurred, they often changed into completely different deities".
[167] Casadio (1990).

had a very large field of application in studies of the history of religion, and in recent times has been criticised by some scholars. For example, A. Motte observes: "les mots 'syncrétisme', 'syncrétique' et 'syncrétiste' sont utilisés dans l'étude scientifique des religions avec une profusion et une confusion telle que leur signification en devient atypique et quasiment inopérante".[168] F. Dunand argues that it would be better to talk about the co-existence of divine figures rather than of syncretism, in particular concerning the situation in late antique Egypt.[169] Even if the abuse of the term 'syncretism' must be avoided, however, the notion of syncretism is still useful to describe the complex phenomenon of magic in Late Antiquity. But due to the difficulty in finding a single agreed definition of the term 'syncretism', it is very important to clarify the particular meaning of the word used in a specific context.

Conclusion

P. Schäfer argues that "magic was an integral part of religion in antiquity, and in late antiquity became a ferment which blurred the distinction between different religions".[170] His theory is that "the latest magic becomes the common denominator of different religions, some kind of *lingua franca* transgressing the traditional boundaries of the religions of the Mediterranean area".[171]

Actually, late antique magic is characterised by a combination of elements belonging to so many religious traditions (Graeco-Roman, Egyptian, Judaic, Christian, Gnostic) that it is impossible to separate them from each other. Nevertheless this does not mean that this syncretism is a 'new religion'.[172] Magical gems and papyri attest to the existence of a very special kind of syncretism where elements belonging to these different religious traditions are linked to each other in order to become a new whole. We can observe a clear tendency to accumulate the divine attributes associated with a particular picture

[168] Motte and Pirenne Delforge (1994) 17: this study is an analysis of the notion of syncretism with related bibliography. The classification pattern of Lévêque (1973) 179–87 is still useful, although it has been criticised in some aspects: see Dunand (1999) 97–116.
[169] Dunand (1999).
[170] Schäfer (1997) 26.
[171] Schäfer (1997) 43.
[172] Casadio (1990).

and to use divine names in formulas and spells as frequently as possible. The magician, in the exercise of his functions, brought together elements of different religious traditions in order to reach his specific aims (the acquisition of love, wealth, health, fame, knowledge of the future and control over other persons) and he used the names and images of powerful deities in order to have ever more power. Gems and papyri both reveal that the magicians knew contemporary cosmological, philosophical and theological theories, but they wanted to control the cosmic powers for practical purposes. This is the reason why religion and magic became so tightly connected without losing their own specific identities. The gems, in particular, are very useful in revealing the everyday needs of people belonging to different social classes: the existence of low quality objects proves the attractiveness of magical amulets even to the poor. Common people probably did not know the complex symbology and the exact religious meaning of the images and names used on these amulets: they only needed powerful and effective objects to face their daily problems.

On the spread and the supposed efficacy of magical amulets in Late Antiquity it is possible to quote a homily by John Chrysostom (A.D. 354–407). In this homily, the Church father reproaches his congregation for using talismans and magical words containing Christian elements:

> Each of you in fact knows that those who trust in incantations are introduced in that way to amulets and the spells of witches; and the image of the cross is surely then covered in shame, since the letters (that cover it) are held in even greater honour. Christ has been driven out to make way for an old, drunk and delirious witch; our holy mystery is trampled and it is the deceit of the devil that leads the dance.[173]

A gem of the British Museum (4th–5th c.) is particularly interesting to illustrate this passage from Chrysostom, for it actually shows a crucifix surrounded by invocations and *voces magicae* (Fig. 10).

Saint Augustine (354–430), in *De Doctrina Christiana*, also condemns the different forms of superstitions and magic, and asserts:

> Everything that has been established by men in order to create and worship idols or creatures or parts of them as if they were God, or to do

[173] Joh. Chrys. *In Ep. ad Col. hom.* 8. 5 (ed. Bareille (1865–1878) 123–24 (n.91)).

Fig. 10 Crucifix with invocations and *voces magicae* (after Michel (2001) 283).

> consultations, or to make agreements with demons on the basis of established signs, like the practices of magical arts, belong to superstition.[174]

In different passages of his works, Augustine offers to us many significant examples of the use that Christians did make of astronomical and magical activities in trying to solve their daily problems.[175]

> Actually, many bad Christians, inquirers of astronomical tablets and researchers and observers of seasons and days, reproached by us or by some good and excellent Christians for their behaviour, answered: "These things are necessary for secular life; but we are Christian in view of eternal life; we believe Christ will give us the eternal life; he is not concerned in this secular life in which we live".[176]

According to Saint Augustine, then, the 'bad' Christians justified their use of practices condemned by the 'good' Christians by asserting that these practices were effective for daily life. The scale of our evidence (gems, papyri, *defixiones* and so on) attests that the phenomenon condemned by the fathers of the Church was truly widespread.

Concluding this paper, it may also be useful to quote a papyrus (6th c.) that contains a Christian text against fever and every sickness:

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[174] Aug. *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.20.30.

[175] See, for example, Aug. *En. in Ps.* 33.18 (PL 36.318) and *sermo* 318.3 NBA 33,760. For specific references to these and other passages see Sfameni Gasparro (1997) 90–93.

[176] Aug. *En. in Ps.* 40,3 (PL 36.456).

> Jesus Christ heals trembling, fever and every disease of the body of Joseph that wears the amulet, he heals the daily and tertian fever. Erichthonios does the same. The white wolf, the white wolf, the white wolf also heals the fever with trembling of Joseph. They are fast.[177]

This is a clear example of the mixture of Christian, Greek and Egyptian elements that characterise most of our late antique magical evidence: Christ is invoked together with Erichtonios and the white wolf. According to Euripides, Erichtonios received from Athena the power to cure illnesses and the white wolf symbolises Horos-Apollo, worshipped at Lykopolis in Egypt.[178]

All these texts attest to the depth and strength of magical beliefs and practices that were characteristic of the late antique view of the world, capable of enduring even after the Christian conversion of the Roman empire.[179] The magical gems offer many useful indications to understand the *forma mentis* of common people in this period, but they must be understood in their wider context and examined with other evidence that reveals the same kind of magical ideas and rituals.

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[177] P. Köln. 851. See Leone (2000) 55.
[178] Leone (2000) 55–56.
[179] Sfameni Gasparro (1997) 91.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. The snake-legged god with a cock's head (after *SGG* 284, n. 225).
Fig. 2. Bes Pantheos (after *SGG* 235, n. 138).
Fig. 3. Harpokrates seated on lotus flower (after *SGG* 169, n. 29).
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SACRED AND SECULAR

THE USE OF SECULARISED LATIN PAGAN CULTURE BY CHRISTIANS

Claude Lepelley

Abstract

The attitudes of educated Christians to the pagan literary culture of Late Antiquity have long attracted scholarly debate. Jerome and Augustine express the unease that many Christian men of letters felt, and Christian apologists repeatedly attacked the absurdity and immorality of pagan mythology. Yet both Jerome and Augustine nevertheless believed that classical culture could contribute to the Christian life, and mythology remained a source of inspiration for certain Christian authors. This is demonstrated vividly by the writings of two important late antique figures, Sidonius Apollinaris in 5th c. Gaul and the 6th c. African poet Corippus. In their works we can trace an evolving acceptance of classical mythology as a cultural rather than religious inheritance, moving towards the later Christian Humanism of the Renaissance.

One remembers well the nightmare that so troubled Saint Jerome: he dreamt that Christ forbade him entrance to paradise with these words: 'You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian', *Ciceronianus es non christianus*.[1] A distinguished man of letters, writing in elegant classical Latin, he was troubled that this culture might be incompatible with his uncompromising Christianity. However, Jerome believed that classical culture could contribute to the Christian life, just as a pagan captive taken as a legitimate spouse is acceptable as long as she becomes a good Israelite, according to Deuteronomy 21:10–13.[2] Saint Augustine, shortly after his conversion, wrote the *De Doctrina Christiana*, a treatise on Christian teaching where he proposed a blending of Christianity and classical culture, with the latter playing a relatively minor role. His reticence appears plainly when, addressing pagans, sometimes he alludes to 'your Virgil', as if the most distinguished Latin poet (much loved and

[1] Jerome, *Ep.* 22.30.
[2] Jerome, *Ep.* 70.2.

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), pp. 477–492

so frequently quoted by him) could not be considered as a part of their shared cultural heritage.[3] In one of his unpublished sermons discovered by François Dolbeau, we see Augustine quoting from Isaiah from a *codex* turned to the appropriate page, 'lest something may escape my memory'. He explained his inability to quote from memory as follows: 'I did not learn these texts while still a child, yet, I can recite from memory other worthless texts. But those things [i.e. the Bible] that I have not studied during my young days, I cannot declaim without consulting the books'.[4] Quoting from memory would not be a problem for reciting verses from Virgil, or other classical texts, because he had learnt them by heart at a young age, when memorising is easy, whereas he discovered the Bible only after his conversion when he was over thirty years old.

However, Augustine tells us in his *Confessions* that when he was a student in Carthage he tried to read the Holy Scriptures, but had been discouraged by what seemed to him to be barbaric writing, lacking in refinement and beauty and 'unworthy of being compared to the greatness of Cicero (the *Tulliana dignitas*)'[5] or to the other classical texts that he had learnt with such delight. Indeed the rough and 'minimal' Latin of the translation of the *Vetus Latina* was sure to offend his literary sensibility. His conversion was in that respect a radical departure. The idea that Judaism and Christianity were barbaric religions, not good enough for a refined and cultivated mind, goes back a long way: it had been hammered out by Celsus in the East in the 2nd c., and remained strongly influential in the Later Roman empire. In the great sermon *Adversus paganos*, recently discovered by François Dolbeau, Augustine imagines an African aristocratic and highly literate man claiming that, if he were to become Christian, he would be 'like his doorkeeper (*ostiaria mea*: the servant slave guarding the gate of his noble home), and not like Plato or Pythagoras'.[6] In cultivated pagan circles the conviction that culture opens the gates to the divine, the Heaven, remained in force: the *Mousikos aner*, that a man devoted to the Muses would obtain astral immortality after death and become a hero in the celestial spheres. Praetextatus was one of the masters

[3] E.g. Aug. *Ep.* 17.1 (to the grammarian Maximus): '… *Vergilio tuo* …' Yet Marrou (1938) 18 rightly wrote that Virgil was "toujours présent à sa mémoire et à son cœur".

[4] Aug. *Sermon Dolbeau* 23.9 (Dolbeau (1996) 610).

[5] Aug. *Conf.* 3.5.

[6] Aug. *Sermon Dolbeau* 26.59 (Dolbeau (1996) 413). Cf. Lepelley (2001) 397–413.

of the pagan reaction, one of the bright lights of Symmachus' circle. He died in 384 and in the epitaph written by his widow Paulina in metric verse, she acclaimed the learned philological works of her husband, dealing with editions of poetry as well as works of prose written by the greatest authors 'in both languages' (Latin and Greek), works 'that open the gates of Heaven'.[7] This religion of culture could thus appear to rival Christianity. As Peter Brown very rightly said, "to a man in Augustine's position, with Augustine's first hand experience of the intellectual world of his days, the real danger came… from the power of these men, who could harden a prestigious tradition against the rise of Christianity".[8]

On this extensive subject I propose simply to examine—especially through two poetical works in Latin—the way classical mythology long remained a source of inspiration for certain Christian authors. This may seem surprising, since poetry far more than prose abounds with references to mythology and interventions by the gods. From the very beginning, Christian apologists vehemently attacked mythological legends, denouncing the absurdity and immorality of these narratives that attribute numerous adventures and sexual or other passions to the gods. But it was quite easy for pagans to explain that 'fables' were a mere product of poetic imaginations and not the essence of their religion. For a very long time, men of letters such as Cicero among the Latins, and earlier authorities among the Greeks, attributed symbolic and rational interpretations to these myths.[9] Moreover, mythology and its anthropomorphism were Greek creations, the Latins having always stood aloof from poetic narratives considered too frivolous (attributed to the 'little Greeks', the *Graeculi*, as opposed to the Roman *gravitas*) or even somewhat sacrilegious with respect to the majesty of the gods. Pagans were much freer with regard to their myths than Christians were towards the stories of the Old Testament (although the Alexandrian exegetical school indulged in allegorical interpretations of the Bible quite similar to philosophical pagan interpretations of myths). Here is some tell-tale evidence for the absence of a true sense of the sacred with regard to mythology. In the West (in North Africa in

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[7] *CIL* VI, 1779 = *ILS* 1259, *a tergo* v. 8–12 (*tu namque quidquid lingua utraq(ue) est proditum / cura sofrorum, porta quis caeli patet, / vel quae periti condidere carmina, / vel quae solutis vocibus sunt edita, / meliora reddis quam legendo sumpseras.*…).

[8] Brown (1967) 302.

[9] This topic is well discussed by Veyne (1983).

particular) as well as in the East, a large number of mosaics representing mythological scenes have been found: for instance the birth of Venus, the Dionysiac procession, Neptune surrounded by other marine deities and Hercules' labours. We know nowadays that many of these date from Late Antiquity and even from the proto-Byzantine period. These mosaics were pavements embellishing the floors of rich houses or baths: people walked on them, trod on representations of the gods. Christians would never have depicted Christ or saints on the floors of their churches; such mosaics or paintings were placed on the walls or vaults.[10] In 427, a law by Theodosius II had formally forbidden representation of the Cross on the ground and ordered that any that already existed be removed.[11] On the other hand, if anyone wanted to depict the emperor on the floor of his home, he risked a very serious charge of lèse-majesté. This disqualifies the theory (proposed shortly after the discovery but later renounced) that the rich and noble owner of the villa of Piazza Armerina (Sicily) who is represented on the famous mosaics was indeed the emperor Maximian Hercules. But one could tread on images of Neptune or Venus with no apprehension. Thus mythological mosaics cannot be used to determine the religious convictions of the owner, as has sometimes been supposed, for instance to conjecture that a mosaic pavement representing the Dionysian procession meant that the owner was initiated into the Bacchus mysteries. Conversely, it can be established that in certain works of Late Antiquity there is an explicit affirmation of paganism. For example on each of the sides of an ivory diptych celebrating an event shared by two leading families of the pagan reaction, the *Symmachi* and the *Nicomachi* (probably the marriage of the son of Nicomachus Flavianus to the daughter of Symmachus in 388/89 or a little later),[12] is depicted a priestess making a sacrifice with incense and libation on a lit altar.[13] This is a ritual scene, much more religiously explicit than

[10] An exception is the pavement mosaic found at Hinton St. Mary (Dorset): see below.

[11] *Cod. Iust.* 1.8.1 ('*…signum Salvatoris Christi nemini licere vel in solo vel in silice vel in marmoribus humi positis insculpere vel pingere sed quodcumque reperitur tolli…*').

[12] *PLRE* I, Flavianus 14, Flavianus 15 and Symmachus 4. Cf. Caillet (1985) 104–107 (with bibliography).

[13] On one side (Victoria and Albert Museum, London) is written *Symmachorum*, on the other (Musée de Cluny, Paris) *Nichomachorum*.

a mythological depiction. The same goes for mosaics of hunting scenes where the owner is seen throwing incense on a lit altar.[14]

The emperor Julian enacted a law in 363 prohibiting Christians from teaching, because he thought that to teach Homer (or Virgil for the Latins) one needed to believe in, respect and worship those gods represented by the poets.[15] Julian had actually been educated in Christianity before becoming 'the Apostate', and one could well imagine him equating the Homeric epics or the *Aeneid* with the Christian Holy Scriptures, a pagan Bible, rather than what these works actually represented for the majority: a simple cultural heritage requiring no particular religious conviction on the part of the grammarian or the rhetor who transmitted them as aesthetic models.

Actually, two types of fundamentalism were in opposition here. That of Julian, requiring genuine faith in the gods of paganism to be in touch with classical culture, and that of those Christians who saw pagan gods as demons who needed to be destroyed, not only in matters of cult, of ritual, but also in the form of sculpture or painting or mosaics representing the gods, along with a prohibition against reading any literary texts alluding to them. They believed that the gods really existed, but that they were demons, fallen angels doing their evil deeds on earth, as depicted by the Jewish apocryph of Enoch. Whereas the Hebrew reads in Psalm 96/95 that 'the gods of the Nations are as nothing', Latin translations, including the Vulgate, state that '(they) are demons' (*omnes dii gentium daemonia*). Inflexible Christians, in particular in some ascetic circles, interpreted these concepts literally and required their followers to renounce any type of culture that was not based solely on the Bible, on the grounds that it was diabolical. Cultural heritage was to be left behind, along with earthly possessions.

However, this attitude ran the risk of a painful choice for educated Christians, witnessed by Jerome's dream. With respect to what he called "the bipolar structure of the Christian empire", Marrou has rightly written that it could lead to "a true schism of the soul, which beyond the level of institutions, reached that of the conscience, often perceived as being torn between two loyalties equally demanding, but

[14] For instance the mosaic depicting a villa and hunting scenes, from Henchir Toungar (Tunisia), Musée du Bardo, Tunis.

[15] Amm. Marc. 25.4.20; Soc. 2.16; Soz. 5.18.3; Aug. *Conf.* 8.5.

contradictory".[16] Marrou was speaking here of a twofold but difficult loyalty to the empire and to the Church, to God and to Caesar, but one can transpose this thinking from politics to culture. This alienation is evident in the curious evolution of the meaning of the words 'Hellene' or 'Hellenism': in the 4th c. these words came to mean pagan or paganism, rather than Greek identity or Greek culture. Thus we see the most learned Greek Fathers of the Church, imbued with Hellenism in the sense of Greek culture, speaking against the 'Hellenes' and 'Hellenism'. Actually, most lay Christian men of letters did not share these anxieties, which could become virtually schizophrenic: the propensity for traditional culture seeming altogether consistent with their religious beliefs. Thus did the truly Christian poet Prudentius view the statues of the gods. He attributes a prophecy to the Roman martyr Saint Laurence announcing the coming of a Christian emperor who would forbid the pagan cult while safeguarding the statues: 'Then, purified of all blood, the marble statues that now are considered as idols will finally shine and the bronzes will stand inoffensive'.[17] In his work 'Against Symmachus', Prudentius describes the long-standing dispute that ended with the removal of the altar of Victory from the Senate's Curia. The statue of Victory remained, however, and the poet appealed to the senators: 'Cleanse, my Lords, these marble statues, tainted with vile blemishes. Let the statues stand pure. They are the works of great artists and can be a fine embellishment of our homeland, no longer defiled by using monuments of art to evil ends'.[18] Prudentius wrote in 405 and the years thereafter, at the time of the sons of Theodosius I, in a period which witnessed the radical prohibition of pagan religious practices as well as an extensive destruction of temples and statues, leading inevitably to renewed accusations of barbarity by the pagans against the Christians indiscriminately vandalising Roman heritage.[19] Prudentius wanted to persuade his fellow Christians to respect the statues of the divinities that had been decon-

[16] Danielou and Marrou (1963) 285.

[17] Prudent. *Perist.* 2.501–505 ('*Tunc pura ab omni sanguine / tandem nitebunt marmora, / stabunt et aera innoxia / quae nunc habentur idola*').

[18] Prudent. *C. Symm.* 1.601–605 ('*Marmora tabenti respergine tincta lavate, / o proceres! Liceat statuas consistere puras, / artificum magnorum opera! / Haec pulcherrima nostrae fiant patriae, nec decolor usus / in vitium versae monumenta coinquinet artis*').

[19] Libanius in 385/386 addressed to Theodosius I his speech *Pro templis* (*Or.* 30), a plea on behalf of pagan temples.

secrated, becoming simple works of art.[20] This enlightened attitude could be mirrored in legislation. As early as 382 Theodosius authorised visits to a temple (probably at Edessa) that had been closed with a view to admiring the statues, which were 'valued more for their artistic importance than for their divine nature'.[21]

A good example of the Christian appropriation of mythological legend is seen in the Late Roman mosaic discovered in 1963 at Hinton St. Mary in northern Dorset and published by J. M. C. Toynbee, who dated the mosaic to the 4th c.[22] On a panel, a draped bust (tunic and pallium) is visible and behind the beardless head, a large chi-rho, the Constantinian chrismon, a pre-eminently Christian symbol. In another part of the same mosaic is depicted Bellerophon riding Pegasus, transpiercing the Chimera with his lance. This recalls later representations of Saint Michael or Saint George killing the dragon (that is the devil), an allegory of the victory of good over evil. But here the connection to the myth is clear because the Chimera is represented in the traditional way with a lion's head, a goat's head and the tail ending in a serpent's head (although Pegasus is wingless). On a series of paleo-Christian works quoted by J. M. C. Toynbee, a head with a chrismon in the background represents Christ. Toynbee draws the conclusion that it is Christ who is depicted at Hinton St. Mary, underlining, however, the unique character of this type of representation on a pavement.

I would like to give in more detail two examples of an extensive use in poetic works of classical mythology, one from 5th c. Gaul, the other from 6th c. Africa. This mythology is seen as a common cultural heritage, albeit secularised or profane (the term *poetae profani* is used), by authors whom one has no hesitation in calling Christian. It should be noted that the two poets in question had a famous predecessor, the rhetor Ausonius from Bordeaux, who had a brilliant political career between 375 and 379.[23] His refined poetry, pedantic and frivolous, abounded in allusions to the gods of mythology, some of which are erotic, like the very Virgilian 'A nuptial cento'. But he is also the author of the *Versus Paschales*, a eulogy in praise of the Easter celebration,

[20] Cf. Lepelley (1994) 5–15.
[21] *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8 ('*simulacra… posita artis pretio quam divinitate metienda*').
[22] Toynbee (1964) 7–14.
[23] *PLRE* I, Ausonius 7.

as well as a pious paraphrase of the *Pater Noster*.[24] He seems to be a good example of the nominal Christians that Jerome and the Pelagians so loathed. Such juxtaposition is again found in Africa in the 5th c. in a work of prose, 'The Wedding of Mercury and Philology' by Martianus Capella, and in Dracontius and the poets of the Latin Anthology.[25] The iconographic equivalent in the 4th c. is to be found in the presence of both pagan and Christian paintings in Rome, in the Via Latina catacomb and the 354 Calendar (The Calendar of Philocalus), where pagan and Christian celebrations appear side by side in text and drawings.

The first of the two poets that I have chosen to highlight is Sidonius Apollinaris (C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius), a Gallic noble born around 430, a *clarissimus* of ancient descent (his father and grandfather had been *praefecti praetorio Galliarum*). He was involved in the events marking the end of the empire of the West and delivered panegyrics in verse for three of the short-lived emperors of the time: Avitus, his father-in-law, in 456; Majorian around 460; and Anthemius in late 467 at Rome, where Sidonius became Prefect of the City for the year 468. Back in Gaul in 469, he quickly became bishop of Clermont, and he remained in this position until his death sometime before 490.[26] The imperial eulogies are consistent with the rules of the genre and, whilst setting forth and deploring the misfortunes of Rome, they express unrealistic hopes that would quickly prove unfounded in the virtues and deeds of these princes. There is one surprising feature of these poems, composed in a traditionally skilful manner: the absence of any reference to Christianity, despite its being the religion of these emperors and of Sidonius himself, who just a few years later became a very pious bishop. One observes, on the contrary, systematic use of mythology. Anthemius' coming to the throne is compared to that of Jupiter after the elimination of Saturn. Jupiter is acclaimed by Mars, Mercury, Apollo and by a triumphal procession of mythological figures (muses, dryads, sylvan deities).[27] Here, at the entreaty of the goddess

[24] *Ephemeris*, 2.3.

[25] Cf. Miles (2005). In this important article, Richard Miles explains "the extensive use of mythology and references to the pagan religion" by Dracontius and the poets of the *Anthologia*, who "created a sophisticated secular world" in Carthage during the Vandal era.

[26] *PLRE* II, Apollinaris 6.

[27] Sid. Ap. *Carm.* 1.1–30 (*Praefactio panegyrici Anthemio dicti*). The references to Sidonius poems are based on Loyen's edition (Loyen (1960)).

of Rome, *Aurora* (Constantinople) sends the new emperor (Anthemius came from the East), whose triumphal *adventus* resembles that of the master of the gods.[28]

The panegyric of Avitus is even more astonishing. Jupiter brings together an assembly of gods, summoned by Mercury. Liber, Ceres, Pallas, Cybele, Phoebus are cited, and even Saturn is called back from exile, joined by Castor and Pollux, Vulcan, and Quirinus: in other words the entire celestial court (*aula caeli*).[29] The goddess Rome sets out her misfortunes in front of this heavenly senate and recalls the divine power (*numen*) that she once possessed and the auspicious Etruscan haruspice of twelve vultures at her birth (vv. 55–56).[30] Then Jupiter himself extols the earlier exploits of Avitus and names him as the new emperor[31] to the cheering of the senate of the gods.[32] These descriptions of divine assemblies call up images of great mosaics (and also future baroque ceiling paintings) depicting processions of multiple deities. This is no longer the religious domain but rather poetic or iconographic manifestations in the profane realm of a cultural *communis patria*.

Carmen 16 offers a sharp contrast: it is a thanksgiving addressed to the bishop Faustus, a Briton who became abbot of Lerins, then bishop of Riez around 460. Here Sidonius completely changes his tone. He says in the exordium he will not appeal to Phoebus, Pallas, the muses, and Orpheus, but to the Holy Spirit.[33] As in the preceding cases, the poem is full of quotations of *exempla*, but here they are all biblical, taken from the Old Testament, though they fulfil the same rhetorical function as the mythological imagery for the panegyrics of the emperors.[34] However, there follows a theological presentation of Christ, God for all eternity, the redemption and the future resurrection of the dead,[35] then praise for the ascetic life and charitable nature of the holy bishop, an approach which has no equivalent in mythological schemes.[36] When Sidonius Apollinaris died, he had been for many years bishop of

[28] *Carm.* 2. 436–548 (Panegyric of Anthemius).
[29] *Carm.* 7.17–44 (Panegyric of Avitus).
[30] *Carm.* 7.45–122.
[31] *Carm.* 7.123–584.
[32] *Carm.* 7.585–602.
[33] *Carm.* 16.1–6 (*Eucharistion ad Faustum episcopum*).
[34] *Carm.* 16.7–39.
[35] *Carm.* 16.40–67.
[36] *Carm.* 16.68–128.

Clermont. Yet his epitaph praises at length his political and literary merits, but treats his qualities as a bishop only briefly.[37]

It can be seen that Sidonius strictly separated the two literary genres (pagan and Christian), as did Ausonius before him. This was not the case with the North African poet Corippus, writing a century later than Sidonius, whom we will now address. The *Johannis* is a lengthy epic poem in hexameters, eight books of which have been preserved (4700 lines). It deals with the wars conducted by the Byzantines against the Moors in North Africa between 534 and 546, and especially between 546 and 548 under the command of Johannes Troglita, hence the title. The poem was written at the beginning of the 550s by Flavius Cresconius Corippus, who considered himself a *grammaticus Afer*. This work, inspired by Virgil, Lucan and Claudian, was not well known, but has recently been the subject of several major studies, following J. Diggle and F. R. D. Goodyear's critical edition.[38] Y. Modéran has successfully shown its great documentary value for our knowledge of the Berber world.[39] V. Zarini has highlighted the literary value of the poem.[40] The German scholar J. U. Andres has made a detailed analysis of the religious content of this epic.[41]

In a way, the conflict between the Byzantines and the Moors can be seen as a holy war. According to Procopius, the Patriarch of Constantinople blessed the army of Belisarius when they embarked for Africa in 533.[42] In the epic, the Moors, enemies of Rome, are depicted as pagans, although this was true only of the Syrtic tribes invading Byzacene, not of the Moors of the interior, who had joined the rebellion even though they were Christianised. The general fervently prayed to Christ before a battle: 'August Father of mankind…who crushes the armies of the impious and who has always been the upholder of our Empire', aid us against 'the unfortunate nations that allow themselves to be seduced by abominable idols that they take to be gods'

[37] *ILCV*, 1067 = *CLE* 1516 + *AE* (1994) 1214. The inscription was known thanks to a medieval manuscript, and some scholars doubted its authenticity (for instance *PLRE* II, Apollinaris 6). The discovery at Clermont-Ferrand in 1991 of two pieces of the original inscription proved the genuineness of the whole document (Prévot (1993); *AE* (1994) 1214).

[38] Published in Cambridge 1970, replacing the edition of J. Partsch in *MGH AA* 3 (1879).

[39] Modéran (2003).

[40] Zarini (2003).

[41] Andres (1997).

[42] Proc. *Wars* 3.12.

(1.286–302). Before a combat, the Eucharist would be celebrated in front of the army with the bishop giving a solemn blessing to the soldiers and their leader (8.326–32; 363–69). The pagan Moors, on the contrary, are subjected to the usual Christian attacks: they adore idols devoid of meaning and put their trust in the false gods, Ammon and Gurzil (2.111–12). The pagan priest and Moorish chief Ierna flees on horseback, carrying off a heavy statue of his god Gurzil. Far from saving him the burdensome idol slows him down and he is caught and killed (4.1137–63). This is meant to prove that the faith of the Moors in the power of these gods and in the effectiveness of their rites imposes a lack of understanding that leads them to their ruin. The description of the Moors consulting the oracles at the sanctuary of Ammon allows picturesque but pathetic literary effects. After sacrificing a bull, the priestess yells, shakes a tambourine, leaps around the altar; the frenzy that overcomes her reveals the presence of a god and at the height of her trance she delivers a prophetic utterance before collapsing exhausted (3.86–114). It has been suggested that the Moors offered human sacrifices to a god named Mastinan, who (for Corippus) is Jupiter Tarania, that is to say the Gallic Taranis, depicted by Lucan as thirsty for human blood (8.307–308). Contradictions notwithstanding, Corippus also attributes to the Moors classical Graeco-Roman prophetic rituals like that of Apollo's tripod and laurel (3.84). The Christian empire struggled with paganism, relegating it to the barbarians and harking back to the war of Actium in the *Aeneid* (8.698–700) where the monstrous gods of Egypt, including 'the barking Anubis', dare to attack the Roman gods.

Now, in what one could call a Christian epic, mythological references abound, starting with the references to the rebellious Moors, the invaders. They are provoked by Bellona (3.36), comparable to Phaeton, who, having usurped Apollo's chariot, risked setting the whole world on fire before being struck down with a thunderbolt from Jupiter (1.336–41). They are encouraged by the Furies and the Erinnyes (3.37; 4.678). The Moorish assembly is similar to the one that Pluto brought together in Arverne to fight against the gods above, mobilising all the monsters of the underworld, the Hydra and the Megaera, 'Alecto furiously shaking the snakes intertwined on her head, Charon abandoning his boat' (4.322–28). An allied Moorish chief who betrayed the Romans is mortally wounded and says that he can see the doors of Tartarus opening up so that he can join 'Catilina pursued by the bloody Furies' (4.212–14). An entire mythological arsenal is brought to bear

on depicting the heinousness of the Moors and expressing the repulsion and incomprehension that they inspired in the Romano-Africans, the Romanised Africans, of whom Corippus is a good representative.

Mythological imagery is also used elsewhere by Corippus, not only in railing against the rebellious Moors. There are numerous metonymies for the natural elements: the sun is always called Phoebus and the harvests Ceres. As for abstract concepts, Mars indicates war, and the Fate Lachesis, cutting the thread of life, means death (3.338 and 425). The struggle undertaken by Johannes Troglita is likened to that led by Jupiter against the revolting Giants, aided by the archer Apollo and Pallas Minerva, brandishing her lance and petrifying her enemies thanks to the Gorgon's head on her shield (1.453–59; 4.800–801). The chief Moor Cuzinas, faithful ally of Rome, outdoes all the warriors 'including Adonis, dear to Venus, and the brave Achilles' (4.514). Commentators have, however, noted that the divinities mentioned do not determine the action, in contrast to what is seen in the Homeric or Virgilian epics: it is the one and only God who imposes His will (at times also fate—*fata* or *Fortuna*: 3.412). It is for Him that the Byzantine army fights. Mythology is used on a massive scale, but only as a literary device purged of those elements deemed immoral or contrary to dogma.

Yet certain passages attest to the persistence of traditional notions, especially in descriptions of the hereafter. If 'the realm of Styx', where the wicked are cast down (1.401; 6.273; 8.616), signifies the Christian concept of hell, it is surprising that the general, in a fervent Christian prayer, calls God not only 'creator of earth, sea and the heavens', but also 'of the sombre Arvernus, abode of the pale shadows' (8.341–45). Mortally wounded a heroic Roman officer named Putzintulus cries to his soldiers: 'Victory is yours, citizens, sacrifice this barbaric people to my manes…and I will go more joyfully down to the realm of shadows' (8.497–500). 'Thus', continues the poet, 'did this rival of Decius go down to the infernal banks' (8.506–507): we may recall that Decius was the hero, in the history of ancient Rome, who 'dedicated himself' to the gods by sacrificing his life in order to secure victory against the Latins in 340 B.C.[43]

In some respects, one can speak here of true syncretism, but more often mythology remains a literary embellishment of the 'grand style',

[43] In Livy 8.9.

except in polemic against the practices of the Moors, who are both pagan and barbarians. Most noteworthy is surely the way that Christian prayers to God and to Christ are juxtaposed to the numerous mythological references. This was not the case, as previously mentioned, with Sidonius Apollinaris, who, a century earlier, carefully separated the two literary styles. By the 6th c., paganism in the West had been stamped out, except amongst barbarian peoples, so men of letters could then use its heritage without any hesitation, since it had become a simple cultural inheritance. Their attitude was already that of humanists, already comparable to that of poets or artists of the Renaissance or the Baroque period. But it should be stressed that this was already the attitude, much earlier, of pagan men of letters towards these legends and poetic creations.

In his important work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman City*, Wolfgang Liebeschuetz describes the preservation of classical literary tradition in Vandal Africa with its customary use of mythology, thanks to Martianus Capella, Dracontius and the poets of the Latin Anthology. He adds that from the establishment of the Byzantine domination in 533, literature on secular themes written by laymen vanished in Africa, giving way to "the replacement of literature by theology" which in turn would disappear with the Arab conquest.[44] So Liebeschuetz, surprisingly, either disregards or fails to remember Corippus, who, as stated earlier, wrote the *Johannis* in the middle of the 6th c. After the death of Justinian in 565, this 'African grammarian' wrote a panegyric of his successor Justin II.

Like Sidonius, like Cassiodorus in Italy in the 6th c., Corippus wrote for a small audience of aristocrats and leading men of letters educated in traditional schools and able to appreciate these literary diversions written in a refined and over-elaborate style, incomprehensible outside their confined circle. Since the second half of the 6th c., this milieu had been slowly disappearing in the West, and Corippus can be considered as the survivor of an endangered species, a surviving dodo, which in a certain way explains Liebeschuetz's oversight. Robert Markus has noted that in the Italy of the second half of the 6th c., after the ruinous Byzantino-Gothic war, was to be found only a "culture vastly impoverished by the collapse of secular institutions and secular learning, and by the virtual disappearance of the aristocratic elites on which it largely

[44] Liebeschuetz (2001) 332.

depended".[45] For his part, Cyril Mango observes in an article on "The Byzantine attitude to Graeco-Roman Antiquity" that the final blow to ancient art and culture was the end of the civic way of life and of the urban elite (and the subsequent closing of schools where the classics were taught) rather than Christianisation.[46] The crucial shift, he claims, was the break both social and cultural brought about by a series of catastrophes that hit the Byzantine world beginning in the last third of the 6th c. The German historian W. Brandes wrote that the Byzantine empire (at least what was left of it after the Arab conquest) had by the 7th c. become largely deurbanised ("ein weitgehen desurbanisiertes Land").[47] And, as Markus writes, "even the minority culture that classical learning had been was rapidly becoming a thing of the past".[48] Along with this tradition was also swept away the long survival of the 'secular' authors and their use of secularised mythology.[49] Only religious education remained, based on the Bible and dispensed in monasteries. Cassiodorus, minister of the Ostrogothic kings in the first third of the 6th c., had made great efforts to uphold the traditions of classical learning in Italy: the official acts that he wrote and collected under the title *Variae* were written following learned and refined prose models, with repeated references to mythology.[50] After the disastrous Byzantino-Gothic wars, he founded (around 553) the monastery of Vivarium on his lands at Scillacium in Bruttium (later Calabria) where monks were trained in skilful copying of manuscripts, though the instructions that he wrote for them (*Institutiones*) show that he had resigned himself to limiting their training in liberal arts to a strict minimum, that is to say mostly spelling and grammar, with very little exposure to secular authors. He was well aware that time had moved on.

The West was entering the age of the palimpsests, manuscripts that had been washed or scraped to make room for Christian texts. This practice was at its height in the 7th c. and in the beginning of the 8th c.,

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[45] Markus (1990) 219.
[46] Mango (1994) 95–120.
[47] Brandes (1995).
[48] Markus (1990) 221.
[49] In the East, classical literary models continued to occur in works from the early 7th c., as in the writings of George of Pisidia; cf. Frendo (1984). I thank Dr David Gwynn for this reference.
[50] Lepelley (1990).

the most famous example being Cicero's *De Republica*, where the uncials of the 4th or 5th c. show through under the *Enarrationes in psalmos* of Saint Augustine, copied in the 7th c. at Bobbio. In this monastic world there was no room for secular works. Thanks to British and Irish scholars, knowledge and copying of the ancient authors continued discreetly, but then two 'darker' centuries went by before a renaissance in the Carolingian era of a Christian humanism comparable to that of the secular scholars of Late Antiquity.[51] Nevertheless, it was only at the time of Italian humanism in the 15th c., a thousand years after Sidonius Apollinaris, that a taste for pagan mythology would take hold again among Christian poets and artists.[52]

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[51] Cf. Reynolds and Wilson (1974) 71–82.

[52] I am very grateful to Dr Ingrid Herring and Dr David Gwynn for their invaluable assistance in the English redaction of this paper.

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THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR: THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN SECULAR WRITING IN THE LATE ANTIQUE WEST

Mark Humphries
with David M. Gwynn

Abstract

The impact of Christianity on secular life in Late Antiquity is often conceived in rather negative terms, as various characteristic features of classical Antiquity are regarded as coming to an end. Within this interpretative framework, most studies of the literature of Late Antiquity have focussed on the survival of 'classical' (or 'pagan' or 'secular') traditions and tropes in Christian writings. This paper examines the question from the opposite perspective. It aims to forefront various ways in which Christian discourses penetrated writings that were not primarily religious in content in the Latin West from the 4th c. to the 6th.

Introduction: Christian Culture, Classical Culture

Any consideration of the presence or absence of religious thought in the secular literature of Late Antiquity involves engagement with issues of fundamental importance for the era as a whole. The most significant of these is the extent to which the transformation from pagan, classical Antiquity to Christian Late Antiquity—indeed, to Early Medieval Christendom—involved profound cultural change.[1] This is not a topic that has been lacking in scholarly attention. Twenty years ago, in a famous, if controversial, article, Ramsay MacMullen asked "What difference did Christianity make?"[2] His answer across a range of issues was, in essence, 'not a lot'. Only in matters of sexual conduct did he detect major change. Moreover, he saw an echo in literature here: no

[1] For a recent overview, see Smith (2005).
[2] MacMullen (1986). He also treated the problem in MacMullen (1984), esp. 74–85.

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more racy novels, and no more salacious poetry. "*There* was a difference!", he exclaimed.[3]

MacMullen's argument focuses primarily on moral behaviour and as such is inevitably limited in scope and depth. Moreover, his analysis has more to do with absence than with presence: things that had once been essential characteristics of the cultural world of Antiquity were, so to speak, subtracted from it with the advent of Christianity. As such, his final judgement is essentially negative. In tackling the subject in this way, however, he latches onto what has long been the customary scholarly approach to the topic. What has been most discussed is the extent to which the ancient and classical does or does not persist into the new Christian dispensation.[4] On occasion this continuity has been conceived of in religious terms, with those factors that persisted being construed, not always helpfully, as 'pagan survivals'.[5] Appreciations of continuities or discontinuities have informed studies not only of literature, but also of almost all aspects of late antique culture. In these, the traditional/pagan/classical is often seen in stark opposition to the new/Christian/late antique.[6] Furthermore, the former is often regarded as somehow superior to the latter.[7] Thus Wolf Liebeschuetz has examined how the institutions and traditions of the classical city were squeezed out of existence, not least by new Christian social structures, and he has controversially characterised this process as one of 'decline'.[8] Yet the interactions between Christianity and classical forms (in literature, art, and social development) have rightly been regarded also as dynamic.[9] To choose only one example, Michele Renée Salzman has examined the extent to which aristocratic conversion to Christianity involved a two-way exchange: not only did late Roman nobles adopt the new faith, but also Christian preaching, directed in part at such aristocratic converts, began at the same time to manifest

[3] MacMullen (1986) 342 (emphasis in the original).

[4] Hence the classic studies of Christianity and the classical cultural tradition by Cochrane (1944), Chadwick (1966), and Pelikan (1993).

[5] For example, MacMullen (1997) revisits such questions for the period 300–800. For critical appraisals, see Gregory (1986) and Markus (1990) 108–10, 206–11.

[6] For a critique of such polarity in studies of the city of Rome, see Marazzi (2000). "The time has come to produce a model for late antique Rome that goes beyond the divisive confrontation between two polarities, the classical and the Christian" (40).

[7] A penetrating critique of this topos is offered in Averil Cameron (1991) 17–29.

[8] Liebeschuetz (2001a). See also Liebeschuetz (2001b) and the responses it generated.

[9] On literature, see especially Averil Cameron (1991).

signs of interest in elite concerns with status and honour.[10] Clearly any assessment of the impact of Christianity on the classical world needs to account for such dynamism and should involve something more sophisticated than merely keeping score of what was lost and what was maintained.

To return for a moment to MacMullen, it should be pointed out that his view that Christianity made only a minimal impact has not met with universal endorsement. Other scholars suspect that the answer is more subtle than MacMullen allows, and that it needs to be teased out more carefully. As Robert Markus has shown, continuing to do the same things as before is not the same as 'pagan survival': much depends on the context in which those things continue to be done, and what they mean to the people doing them.[11] In terms of literary output, however, scholars have been most interested in the persistence of secular classical traditions, in various guises, in religious literature, rather than the appearance of the religious, specifically the Christian, in secular literature. There has been rather too much willingness to regard the persistence of non-Christian classical literary traditions as somehow a reflection of the tenacity of 'pagan' culture. For example, it used to be argued that the editing of classical texts, such as Virgil or Livy, by senators at Rome in the late-4th and early-5th c. mirrored a 'pagan reaction' (reflected also in the debate on the Altar of Victory between Symmachus and Ambrose, and the participation of pagan senators in the usurpation of Eugenius) against the increasing clout of institutional Christianity in the Roman empire.[12] Yet Alan Cameron's reconsideration of these activities has demonstrated that such a connection between cultural activity and religious affiliation cannot be drawn so easily.[13] As a corollary, we might argue that the absence of explicit religious thought in a secular text is no guarantee that the shift from pagan to Christian has not been made.

Given that so much discussion has focussed on the persistence of classical traditions, it hardly occasions surprise that there has been rather less examination of the question of the Christian presence in

[10] Salzman (2002) 200–19.

[11] Markus (1990), esp. 5–8, engaging with MacMullen's arguments. See also n. 5 above.

[12] Bloch (1963).

[13] Alan Cameron (1999), (2004). For a general appraisal of the issues, and particularly the arguments of Bloch (1963), see Hedrick (2000) 37–88.

secular literature. Here, once again, the prejudicial notion that Christianisation involved the triumph of the 'popular' or the 'culturally inferior' has probably been instrumental in dictating scholarly perspectives and priorities. At the same time, it has often struck me that studies of the formation of Christian culture in Late Antiquity tend to limit themselves to specifically religious texts, such as those concerned with matters of theological speculation or works of biblical exegesis.[14] As a result, the question of the presence of religious thought in non-theological or non-exegetical works has received only scant attention.

This is now beginning to change. The works of Averil Cameron, Hervé Inglebert and others have highlighted the dynamic cultural interchanges of Late Antiquity.[15] Such more recent analyses suggest that a quest for the sacred amid the secular is a worthwhile undertaking, not least because it may permit us to draw some conclusions about the 'depth' to which Christianity penetrated aspects of literary output quite apart from those specifically concerned with matters of the faith. Thus this paper aims to examine the extent to which Christian ideas can be traced in secular Latin literature produced in the West between, roughly, the 4th and 6th c. It will be argued that religious concerns crop up in a variety of ways, some of them explicit, others more subtle. I would suggest also that we need to comprehend that Late Antiquity witnessed an important shift in *mentalités*, meaning that even works that appear trenchantly secular would have been read through the refracting lens of Christianity, with the result that they might have been interpreted as possessing certain 'religious' meanings that crude definitions of 'sacred' and 'secular' are liable to miss. It will be as well, therefore, to proceed to such questions of definition without delay.

Defining Sacred and Secular Literature in the Late Antique West

It is perhaps discouraging for someone embarking on an analysis of the presence or absence of religious thought in secular writing for the

[14] Young (1993), and the works cited in n. 4 above.

[15] Averil Cameron (1991), Inglebert (2001). See also the articles in Scourfield (2007), which examine how the classical literary heritage was received and manipulated in Late Antiquity.

Latin West to consider what exactly constitutes 'secular' literature. It is easy to be overwhelmed—even depressed—by the sheer volume of extant Christian literature,[16] but that is not the same thing as saying that there are no secular writings. We have histories, of which more later. Philosophy is well represented, from Macrobius, through Martianus Capella, to Boethius. There are technical treatises on military affairs, medicine, geography, physiognomy and so forth. And we have poets, letter-writers, grammarians, and commentators besides.[17] Yet there is also much that we have lost. For historiography, compare the situation in the West with that in the East. For the East, not only do we have complete 'secular' histories by Procopius, Agathias, and Theophylact Simocatta, but also a substantial body of fragments from other works. In the West, by contrast, nothing survives in anything like a complete form after Ammianus (of which so much is missing anyway). As for fragments, compare Roger Blockley's hefty collection of snippets from classicising Greek historians of the 5th and 6th c. with the few pathetic remnants (six each!) of the 5th c. Latin historians Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus and Sulpicius Alexander found in Gregory of Tours' *Histories*.[18] The contrast is sobering.

Even so, the utility of much of this material for a study of religious belief or apathy in the West is doubtful.[19] It is clear, for instance, that many of these texts *do* show that even pagans eventually came to concede that the Christians in their midst could not be ignored—but this was a gradual process. The authors of various mid-4th c. *breviaria* are reticent on the subject, at least explicitly: only Eutropius makes a passing

[16] Two statements, relating to the survival of pagan and Christian literature, are instructive in this regard. Ramsay MacMullen speaks of his despair at being confronted by shelves full of Christian writings, when he could hold Zosimus in his hand: MacMullen (1997) 3 (cf. 1997: 4 on the near destruction of the only copy of Cicero's *De Republica* "to make room for our hundredth copy of Augustine's meditations on the Psalms"). Similarly, John Matthews bemoaned the fact that the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus survived (and incompletely at that) in only a few manuscripts, whereas there were hundreds of manuscripts of Orosius' *Seven Books of Histories Against the Pagans*—this, he said, was an embarrassment to the historian's profession: Matthews (1989) 6.

[17] In general, see Averil Cameron (1998), Courcelle (1948), Dihle (1994) 434–502, Sheppard (2000) 852–4.

[18] Blockley (1981–3); Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* II.8–9.

[19] For a parallel debate in the East see the contrasting views over the Christianity of Procopius in Averil Cameron (1985) 113–33 and Kaldellis (2004), and the article of Elizabeth Jeffreys elsewhere in this volume.

reference to Christianity, in connection with Julian.[20] By contrast, their accounts of the period from Diocletian and Constantine give little hint of the tremendous religious changes that were occurring; to read these secular narratives is to enter, as it were, a parallel history to that described, for example, in Rufinus' translation and continuation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. By the end of the century, however, a change had occurred—not least, perhaps, because of the increasing intransigence of Christian emperors in their attitudes to non-Christian subjects, which meant that Christianity itself could no longer simply be passed over in silence. Hence Christianity looms large in the surviving narrative of Ammianus, however much he tried to compose history in a lofty classical style (*ad maiores… stilos*).[21] Once seen as even-handed in his approach to Christianity,[22] Ammianus now seems, thanks to the researches of T. D. Barnes and David Woods, to be an altogether more critical observer of the rise of Christianity in Roman society.[23] He was sensitive and well informed too: his rebuke of the worldly extravagance of the bishops of Rome plays neatly on Christian ideals of humility.[24]

Moreover, when considering how theological concepts might impinge on 'secular' writings, we need to bear in mind that even in explicitly Christian works they did so in a remarkable variety of ways. A comparison between the 5th c. Latin chronicles by Prosper of Aquitaine and Hydatius of Lemica is instructive in this regard. Both were writing continuations of Jerome's translation and continuation of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicle*. In both, theological agendas are prominent, but are presented very differently. For Prosper, history was a parade of moral *exempla* that showed the perils of excessive pride (*superbia*). Such is the case, for example, with the revolt of the general Boniface, which Prosper attributes to the discord and pride of the rival commander Castinus.[25] Hydatius' narrative is more deeply suffused

[20] Eutropius, *Brev.* 10.16.

[21] Amm. Marc. 31.16.9.

[22] Hence Matthews (1989) 435–51 and Hunt (1985) and (1993)—ultimately dependent on Gibbon, of course.

[23] Barnes (1998) 79–94; Woods (1998).

[24] Amm. Marc. 27.3.14; discussion in Matthews (1989) 444–45.

[25] Prosper, *Chron.* c. 1278. So too the Vandal king Gaiseric is described as enjoying success against imperial forces in Sicily—but this success provokes pride and with pride comes anxiety, as Gaiseric becomes suspicious of those closest to him (c. 1348). On this aspect of Prosper's *Chronicle*, see Muhlberger (1991) 127–35.

with explicit theologising, yielding an altogether bleaker account, a grim providential history of barbarian invasions and the collapse of imperial institutions. In particular, he saw biblical prophecy fulfilled in the political events of his own day. Thus the marriage of Athaulf and Galla Placidia confirmed Daniel's prophecy that the daughter of the king of the south would be united with the king of the north.[26] Such observations give Hydatius' chronicle a wholly different flavour from Prosper's. Contrast, for example, their accounts of the barbarian invasions of Spain in 409/10. Prosper recorded this with the pithy *Wandali Hispanias occupaverunt*.[27] In Hydatius, the event is described at length in apocalyptic terms. Plague, plunder, and famine run riot, while animals turn to feast on humankind. 'Thus', concluded Hydatius, 'with the four plagues of sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts raging everywhere throughout the world, the annunciations foretold by the Lord through his prophets came to fulfilment'.[28] Even if we allow for the fact that Hydatius, as an Iberian, was more interested in events in Spain, the apocalyptic overtones of his account contrast markedly with anything found in Prosper. Given that Christian writers allowed theological ideas to penetrate their explicitly 'religious' works in such different ways, we should perhaps be sensitive to the fact that Christian authors of 'secular' works might present a similar variety of opinions. The presentation (or omission) of theological ideas will depend greatly on their particular agendas, and the contexts within which they wrote. In the space available to me, I can give only a few examples, but I hope they will be instructive.

Sacred, Secular, and the State

In the first place, much secular literature, even when produced by Christians, was so bound by the conventions of tradition and genre that specifically Christian elements did not appear. Sidonius Apollinaris, in the 5th c., provides a telling example of this sensitivity to such literary concerns. His panegyrics on the emperors of the day are filled with allusions to pagan mythology: the goddess Aurora grants to

[26] Hydatius, *Chron.* c. 57 Burgess; cf. Daniel 11.5–6.
[27] Prosper, *Chron.* c. 1237.
[28] Hydatius, *Chron.* c. 40 Burgess. On this feature of Hydatius' *Chronicle*, see Burgess (1996) and Muhlberger (1991) 260–64.

Rome the emperor Anthemius (467–72) from the East, while a decade earlier Jupiter himself had presided over the debate of the gods that hailed the reign of Sidonius' father-in-law Avitus (455–6).[29] It has been aptly observed that if these texts were all we had to rely upon for our image of Sidonius, we would hardly guess that he was not just a Christian, but destined to be a bishop as well.[30] We are not dealing here with any 'pagan survival'. Sidonius clearly knew what he was doing: the language of his imperial encomia was specifically appropriate to their genre and circumstances. In other contexts, however, he shows explicitly how he could be less bound by such considerations of literary convention. He began a poem addressed to bishop Faustus of Riez, who baptised Sidonius, by rejecting the traditional sources of inspiration for classical poetry—Phoebus, the Muses, Pallas, Orpheus and so on—and calling instead on God to guide him.[31] What followed eschewed the tropes of classical mythology in favour of *exempla* lifted from the Bible.

While Sidonius could consciously decide to opt for the biblical over the classical depending on his particular literary agenda, other authors could mention religious subjects in a rather matter of fact manner, even in works that were, in all other respects, avowedly devoted to the classical tradition. Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, dating to the late-4th or early-5th c.,[32] is steeped in the ancient martial traditions of Rome, stretching back to the days of the Republic. For him, moreover, devotion to tradition was a matter of practical concern, since he perceived the abandonment of Rome's ancient military *mores* as threatening the empire's ability to defend itself.[33] And yet, when he comes to discuss the oaths sworn by the recruits forming a new legion, Christianity intrudes. Soldiers are said to 'swear by God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and by the majesty of the emperor', and the emperor is said

[29] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* II.516–21 (Anthemius); VII (Avitus).
[30] Mitchell (1998) 180.
[31] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* XVI.1–6.
[32] The date of Vegetius' work remains highly controversial. For the debate see Milner (1993) xxv–xxix, who places the work in the reign of Theodosius I (379–95), and Charles (2007), who prefers a date under Valentinian III (425–55).
[33] See most famously Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* I.20, the notorious claim that under Gratian the Roman infantry abandoned their traditional armour and that this led directly to defeat by the Goths.

to rule 'by God's authority'.[34] In Vegetius, not just Christianity, but an incontrovertibly Trinitarian theology, sits side-by-side with military advice culled from the likes of Cato and Frontinus.

Sometimes the Christian presence was more pervasive. The collection of letters from Ostrogothic Italy assembled in the *Variae* of Cassiodorus has rightly been regarded as an important source for the self-conscious creation of an image of studied *Romanitas* by king Theoderic (493–526) and his immediate successors.[35] Yet it did more than that: as Barnish has observed, their *Romanitas* was specifically Christian, so that the *Variae* "graft a certain amount of Christian morality and allusion" onto the traditional style of official correspondence.[36] For example, Cassiodorus' formula on the appointment of praetorian prefects exhorted them to model themselves on the patriarch Joseph and to discharge their duties as if they held the priesthood.[37] A letter penned by him to the Roman senate on behalf of king Athalaric (526–34) asserted that government would prosper when influenced by biblical precepts: 'affairs are always well conducted if the fear of heaven is opposed to human impulses… Thus, this man imbued with the discipline of heaven is rendered lowly in all things'.[38] Cassiodorus underscored such arguments by appending to the *Variae* his treatise *De Anima* (*On the Soul*).[39] There the theme of virtue was developed further, with reflection on the deployment of moral virtues in the conduct of public life, thus protecting the soul from the temptation of this world.[40] Considered as a work comprising both letters and a theological treatise, then, the individual documents in the *Variae* might be regarded, as Barnish has put it, as secular sermons "contain[ing] a Christian ethic of government".[41]

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[34] Vegetius, *Epitoma Rei Militaris* II.5.
[35] Amory (1997) 48–78; see also Gillett (1998) for the purposes of the *Variae*.
[36] Barnish (2001) 368.
[37] *Variae* 6.3.1–2, 9.
[38] *Variae* 9.25.11.
[39] See Gillett (1998) 40, on the importance of seeing the *De Anima* as an integral part of the *Variae*. For the *De Anima* itself, see Halporn and Vessey (2004) 19–22.
[40] *De Anima* 7, 12–13, 17.
[41] Barnish (2001) 369.

Religious Patterns in the Life of Theoderic the Ostrogoth

Cassiodorus' writings are highly sophisticated; his use of biblical allusion subtle. Another work, rather more low-brow, but also Italian and from roughly the same period, makes similar use of religious thought to further its argument. The account of the reign of Theoderic in the second part of the *Anonymus Valesianus* presents a curious mixture of styles: there has been much debate about the identity of its author (or even authors).[42] For my purposes, what is important about the text is that it shows the penetration of religious discourse into what is, for the most part, a secular narrative.[43] It begins with an account of Odoacer, king of Italy from 476 to 493. Into this are incorporated passages drawn from a hagiographical source, Eugippius' *Life of Severinus*.[44] In these, the holy man prophesied about both the success of Odoacer's invasion of Italy and (later) the length of his reign. Thus the political history of Italy is not political history pure and simple, but is circumscribed by the utterances of a saint.

The account that follows of Theoderic's reign adheres to a single and quite straightforward thesis: for the first 30 years, while the Arian king made no assault on his Catholic, Roman subjects, all would go well; thereafter, when his heretical beliefs drove him to persecute the Catholics, came catastrophe. During the good years of the reign, Theoderic was hailed 'even by the Romans' as a Trajan or a Valentinian,[45] and, although an Arian, he went to Rome and *occurrit Beato Petro devotissimus ac si catholicus*.[46] But once the king's heresy gained the upper hand, such ideals of behaviour were transferred to the Constantinopolitan emperor Justin who, when pope John visited Constantinople, *ita occurrit* [sc. to John] *ac si Beato Petro*.[47] The account of Theoderic's last years is replete with examples of royal behaviour that contradict the earlier promise. The king favoured Jews and heretics as he opposed Catholics; he overturned Christian altars, but ordered orthodox Christians to

[42] See Adams (1976) 3–6.

[43] For a discussion of the *Anonymus Valesianus* as a source for the reign of Theoderic see König (1997) and Moorhead (1992), esp. 261–63.

[44] E.g. *Anon. Val.* 46 draws material from Eugippius, *Vita S. Severini* 6–7 and *Anon. Val.* 48 from.*VSS* 32. For a commentary on these passages see König (1997) 113–8.

[45] *Anon. Val.* 60.

[46] *Anon. Val.* 65.

[47] *Anon. Val.* 91.

pay for the reconstruction of a synagogue.[48] In the end, he died form a violent bout of diarrhoea—a fitting end, since it was the same as that suffered by the heretic Arius himself, whose death itself recalled the fate of the traitor Judas.[49] The transformation in Theoderic is ascribed to the temptations of the devil (78, 83); as a result, the king was longer a friend of God, and forgot what favour God had previously shown him.[50]

Taken as a whole, the text, for all its secular content, presents a theology of legitimate rule centred upon God and respect for orthodoxy. The narrative thus framed by this confessional agenda is shot through, moreover, with language that shows familiarity with various types of Christian discourse. It echoes idioms found in hagiography,[51] technical terms relating to strife among the clergy,[52] and, in a famous passage where pope John refuses to communicate a message from Theoderic to Justin, the words of Jesus to Judas, whose fate Theoderic would share.[53] In short, what appears on first glance to be a straightforward, if confessionally biased, narrative of the reign is actually written in a style that shows the deep penetration of theological language.

Secular Texts, Sacred Editions

I want to finish with another manifestation of the presence of Christian ideas in 'secular' literature, namely the way in which Christian ideas could be incorporated into secular works by later Christian redactors. Two examples will suffice.

The first text I want to consider is the *Origo Constantini*, the brief account of the reign of the emperor Constantine (306–37) that forms the first part of the *Anonymus Valesianus*. The original text was probably composed not long after Constantine's death and was a purely secular

[48] *Anon. Val.* 80–3.

[49] *Anon. Val.* 95; the original account of the death of Arius is in Athanasius, *Letter* 54 (the *De Morte Arii*).

[50] *Anon. Val.* 88.

[51] The demonic seizure suffered by one of the crowd at pope John's funeral (93) is described by the words *arreptus demonio*. For parallels, see Adams (1976) 25.

[52] The disputed papal election of 499 is described as an *intentio* (65): cf. Adams (1976) 28.

[53] The pope's words 'Whatever you do…do quickly' (*Quod facturus es…facito citius*: 89) clearly echoing Jesus' *Quod facis, fac citius* in John 13:27. For other parallels from the Vulgate, see Adams (1976) 28.

narrative.[54] In its present form, however, it shows signs of Christian interpolations of 5th c. (or later) date that served to transform it into a Christian narrative of sorts. These interpolations consist of a series of verbatim (or nearly verbatim) quotations lifted from Orosius' seven-book *Historiae Adversus Paganos*—all of them, moreover, coming from a single chapter of that work![55] The war between Constantine and Licinius in 324 is now attributed to the latter's persecution of Christians,[56] whereas the original text referred only to Constantine's infringement of Licinius' sphere of influence,[57] and Licinius' role as a persecutor in turn justifies his subsequent execution.[58] Orosius is also the source for the statement that Constantine, with the exception of Philip the Arab, was the first Christian emperor and that all his successors, with the exception of Julian, were likewise Christians;[59] and for the assertion that Constantine ordered all pagan temples to be closed.[60] Some of these insertions are rather clumsy: for instance, that about the emperor's victories repeats data about the Goths that had already been recounted in an earlier chapter of the original.[61] Even so, they have the effect of transforming the neutral, secular *Origo* into a haphazardly Christian narrative.

A similar process can be seen in my second example, the geographical work known as the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*.[62] The textual history of this work is tortuous in the extreme, and it survives in two distinct forms: the *Expositio* proper, and a variant called the *Descriptio Totius Mundi et Gentium*. The two works are clearly related: Jean Rougé, their most recent editor, postulated that the original version of the work (which no longer survives) was composed in Greek in the reign of Constantius II (337–61), was then translated into Latin (at a date that cannot be identified with any precision), and that the *Expositio* and *Descriptio* represent two different traditions of the translation.[63] What is most interesting for my purposes here is the differences between

[54] See Lieu and Montserrat (1996) 39–62, esp. 39–42.
[55] Orosius, *Hist.* 7.28.
[56] *Origo* V(20).
[57] *Origo* V(21).
[58] *Origo* V(29).
[59] *Origo* VI(33).
[60] *Origo* VI(34).
[61] *Origo* VI(34), repeating VI(31–2).
[62] For a more detailed analysis of this text, see Humphries (2007) 46–51. For late antique geographical writing more generally, see Merrills (2005).
[63] Rougé (1966) 104–27.

the two Latin versions. The *Expositio* seems to be a standard, if slight, geographical work in the pagan, classical tradition.[64] Its description of provinces and cities, for example, includes notices of prominent cults, such as Serapis and Aesculapius at Alexandria,[65] and Jupiter, Sol and the Mother of the Gods at Rome.[66] In almost all cases, the version found in the *Descriptio* omits these details. For instance, the *Expositio* attributes the physical beauty of the women of Heliopolis and Cyzicus to the goddess Venus; the *Descriptio*, by contrast, simply notes their pulchritude.[67] In many respects, the *Descriptio* represents a version of the *Expositio* expurgated of its pagan elements. It does not, in the passages for which we have parallel texts for both *Expositio* and *Descriptio*, insert notices of Christian cult places (explicit ones anyway). Even so, this absence of Christian content cannot reasonably be regarded as a sign of religious apathy: quite the contrary, the secular, non-religious form of much of the *Descriptio* is itself a product of a Christian editorial agenda.

At times, however, the *Descriptio* goes further. The early passages of the text (which are preserved in the *Descriptio* but not in the *Expositio*) contain descriptions of life at the ends of the earth that, in common with much of the classical geographical tradition, stress the blessed existence of the people who live there.[68] At this point the redactor of the version preserved in the *Descriptio* has *added* material, apparently inspired by the biblical visions of paradise.[69] Into the description of the blessed life of the Camarini in the distant East is inserted the observation that Moses (traditionally regarded as the author of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch) called their land Eden, while the great river that flowed through the Camarini's territory is described as dividing into the Geon, Phison, Tigris, and Euphrates—the four rivers that flowed out of Paradise.[70] Like the *Origo Constantini*, the *Descriptio* provides an example of a work that was not originally Christian, but came to be so. Both were actively revised in ways to take account of the new Christian dispensation.

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[64] On the religion of the *Expositio* in general, see Rougé (1966) 48–55.
[65] *Expositio* 35, 37.
[66] *Expositio* 55.
[67] *Expositio* 30.5–6 versus *Descriptio* 30.3–4 (Heliopolis); *Expositio* 48.5–7 versus *Descriptio* 48.5 (Cyzicus).
[68] See Romm (1992) 49–67.
[69] *Descriptio* 4.
[70] Genesis 2:10–14.

Conclusion

As we move from the 4th c. to the 6th—from the world of Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* to that of Cassiodorus' *Institutiones*—we see a significant and increasing shift in terms of the mental and religious co-ordinates within which literature was produced, reproduced, and understood. Much of what we regard as 'secular' literature in Late Antiquity was formulated (and, equally importantly, read) with an eye to this new Christian map of knowledge. An interesting example of this trend is provided by the survival, in a 13th c. manuscript, of a classical geographical handlist under the name of Jerome:[71] so pervasive was the new Christian worldview that even secular works could come to be imagined as the products of ecclesiastical writers. It is in this context, I feel, that much of the literature I have surveyed in this chapter needs to be understood. In some instances, such as Cassiodorus' *Variae* and the account of Theoderic in the *Anonymus Valesianus*, that Christian framework was more or less explicit. In others, such as Sidonius' panegyrics, it was shrouded behind the conventions of circumstance and genre; but, as we have seen, the same author could easily and explicitly eschew the classical in favour of the biblical. In still others, such as Vegetius' *Epitoma Rei Militaris*, a blunt statement of 4th c. Trinitarian theology can suddenly intrude into a work that, in all other respects, regurgitates military advice from a very different world. Can literary genre or religious apathy explain the presence or absence of theology and religious thought in late antique secular writing? I am not sure it can, and in some respects I wonder if we are dealing here with *une question mal posée*. There must certainly have been tensions that caused this presence or absence, and some of them probably had much to do with a delicate balancing act between the classical tradition, to which so many literate persons were devoted, and the Christian world, to which the majority of them increasingly belonged. But in most cases we can only guess as to what such works meant to their authors or how they were interpreted by their readers. Much will surely have depended on the mental baggage that authors and audiences took to the texts they were writing or reading, but

[71] Humphries (2007) 46 and 60 n. 75.

evidence for such mental insights can only be glimpsed now and again, and for the most part, like those late antique authors and readers, has long since turned to dust.[72]

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LITERARY GENRE OR RELIGIOUS APATHY? THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN SECULAR WRITING IN THE LATE ANTIQUE EAST

Elizabeth Jeffreys

Abstract

John Malalas, author of a Christian world chronicle compiled initially *ca.* 532 and completed *ca.* 565, shows only token interest in the Christian trappings of the world around him: he records items of ecclesiastical bureaucracy such as councils and the election or deposition of patriarchs. Of far more real concern to him are rituals and strands of belief that are barely Christian, as shown by his references to '*mystikoi*' and his millennial preoccupations.

This paper focuses on the 6th c., a period which offers much potential—in the persons and writings of, say, Procopius or Agathias—for the probing of secular religious sensibilities. Agathias in particular in his verse combines epigrams written completely within the classical, even Hellenistic, conventions of a slightly outrageous eroticism with others that soberly dedicate votive icons to the Archangel Michael. The recent work of Anthony Kaldellis on both Procopius and Agathias suggests many other possibilities, not least the existence of—perhaps not a 'Dead Poets' Society'—but more of a 'living Platonists' cabal' that leavened intellectual debate in mid-6th c. Constantinople.[1] But to deal with the issues that Kaldellis raises and suggest alternative approaches would take more time than allowed in this conference framework, and can certainly be done more expertly by others.

Equally this paper shirks a discussion of perhaps the most obvious secular text in the Greek East at this period which confronts the Christianisation of society, and that is the *New History* of Zosimus. Zosimus' history is predicated on the folly of abandoning the rituals of state cult that had served the Romans so well for so many years. He dates the

[1] Kaldellis (1997), (1999), (2003A), (2003B), (2004A), (2004B).

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start of Rome's decline from the moment that Constantine abandoned the Saecular Games; he attributes Constantine's conversion to the most sordidly pragmatic of reasons, and can see no good whatsoever in the new religion. Zosimus is conventionally considered by modern scholarship, faced with a lack of contemporary or medieval information, to have been writing around the year 500, between 498 and 505, on the basis of references to repealed legislation and his supposed use of Eustathios of Epiphaneia.[2] From what we can glimpse of other writers and currents of thought at this time, Zosimus stands out as an anachronistic pagan of the most obdurate kind—however one might define pagan. One solution would be to suggest that in fact Zosimus was writing not in the early 500s but considerably earlier—say in the 440s: this is a case that has been suggested over the years by Brian Croke, and is now receiving some support though it has yet to be argued out in detail.[3] Zosimus in this scenario would then not stand out as an outrageous anachronism but fit in as an outraged reaction to the ecclesiastical histories of Sokrates and Sozomen.

There are indeed poets other than Agathias who could be considered in this context. There is a modest blooming of *epyllia* in the reign of Anastasius: Colluthus and his *Rape of Helen*, Musaeus and his *Hero and Leander*.[4] A consideration of their unabashed pursuit of decorative retelling of legend might make Zosimus seem less out of place.

However, the text on which this short paper will concentrate is the chronicle of John Malalas.[5] At first sight, perhaps, this might seem to fit awkwardly with the proposal to examine the presence or absence of religious thought in 'secular' writing. Malalas' chronicle is after all a history of the world from Creation to the author's own times, written from a Christian perspective in what became that most Byzantine of genres, a Christian world chronicle. But I take as my justification the argument, that has not so far to my knowledge been contradicted, that Malalas was a secular administrative official, a member of one of the *scrinia* of the *comes Orientis* in Antioch, writing for his peers.[6] He was a

[2] Most recently, and with references to earlier literature, see Liebeschuetz (2003).
[3] Liebeschuetz (2003) 215.
[4] Nicks (2000).
[5] The new standard edition is that of Thurn (2000); English translation: Jeffreys, Jeffreys and Scott (1986). References are to book and paragraph of Thurn (2000), whose paragraphs do not always coincide with those of Jeffreys, Jeffreys and Scott (1986), from which translations are taken.
[6] Croke (1990) 10–11.

layman. The perspective that this text offers has always seemed to me a valuable entrée into the perspectives of a moderately well-educated Byzantine. I also think that the attitudes he reveals are rather more interesting than most of what my investigations so far into Colluthus have turned up.

Malalas' chronicle is predicated on a Christian standpoint. Running in its first edition from Creation to around 532 A.D., the chronicle is divided into 18 books.[7] There is considerable justification for the claim that this is an authorial division and represents Malalas' intention to structure his material. Christ's incarnation is pivotal to this structure: the Annunciation is the last item in Book 9, Christ's birth is the first item in Book 10. This is too neat to be accidental: it must be an intended hinging point. Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection take place in the year 6000 from Adam, and there are two detailed chronological discussions in Book 10 (10.2) and Book 18 (18.8) setting out the support for this date.[8] The chronicle is thus placed into the context of Christian millennial debate: we will return to the millennial aspects later, but for the moment let us retain the Christianising implications.

However, though Malalas may use a Christianising, or Christianised, framework to world events, other trappings that you might expect to follow from this—an interest in ecclesiastical history, theological debate or developments in religious thought—are not what this text is primarily about. This is clear when one looks at later examples in this genre—like the *Chronicon Paschale* (*ca.* 630), the *Chronographia* of Theophanes (*ca.* 817) or the Chronicle of George Monachos (*ca.* 846); all of these, though taking over much material from Malalas, and adopting much of his periodisation of the past, have infinitely more theological and ecclesiastical content. I leave it open whether this has anything to do with the fact that these authors were clerics or monastics while Malalas was not, but it supports my excuse for dealing with Malalas in the context of this conference, and volume, as someone who can be put on the secular side of a literary and intellectual divide.

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[7] The final version of the chronicle was completed after the death of Justinian in 565.

[8] The textual details of these dates are corrupted in the Oxford ms of Malalas, the main witness to the text, and in Dindorf (1831); Thurn (2000) *ad loc.* emends appropriately; the translation (Jeffreys, Jeffreys and Scott (1986)) presents the evidence in the apparatus but does not emend the text; cf. Jeffreys (1990B).

But that is not to say that Malalas has absolutely nothing to contribute in the ecclesiastical and theological areas. He provides the essentials for understanding the development of Christian frameworks. He gives a sketchy outline of the life of Christ: his birth, the visit of the magi and their encounter with Herod (one might wonder if this episode is included because of the presence of the magi, since Malalas elsewhere shows an interest in Persian wise men and fire-worship) (10.4); then the preaching of John the Baptist (10.11); Christ's miracles are represented by his dealings with the woman with the issue of blood (perhaps included because of the famous statue of Christ, apparently visible 'to the present day' in Paneas; 10.12); and then the Crucifixion and Resurrection for which very precise chronological details are provided with the Resurrection taking place on 26 March, just as the day was dawning (10.14). The apostles are mentioned as being persecuted by Jews, who then rebel against Rome (10.25), the implication being that proselytising has been taking place. Nero wishes to investigate the renowned prophet Christ but discovering he has died is forced to make do with Simon Magus and Saint Peter (10.30 ff.). Interspersed with this are episodes from secular imperial history, largely dealing with imperial building campaigns in Antioch.

Note that immediately after the section on the visit of the magi to Bethlehem and the Slaughter of the Innocents, Malalas relates a visit by Augustus to 'the oracle', named as Pythia but whose location is unrecorded (10.5). After an initial enigmatic silence to his enquiry as to who will reign over the Roman state after him, the response comes: 'A Hebrew child ruling as god over the blessed ones bids me abandon this abode' (10.5). This is one of the so-called pagan prophecies or oracles foretelling the appearance of Christ found in what came to be known as the Tübingen Theosophy, an enigmatic text which has survived in scattered fragments and whose nature and purpose, combining prophetic texts with a chronicle, has not yet been fully worked out.[9] It is part of my understanding of Malalas' relationship with the standard Christian package, as it were, that the relationship is not entirely standard. In Malalas' narrative Christ has been recognised by the magi,

[9] Erbse (1995) 34; Beatrice (2001), providing an alternative construction of the Theosophy, is illuminating and convincing; he is not convinced of the existence of the intermediary recension that Erbse argued was Malalas' source (Erbse (1995) xl). I do not propose to engage here with Beatrice's very suggestive proposal that the author of the Theosophy was Severus, monophysite patriarch of Antioch (512–18).

who have mystic knowledge, and by the oracle consulted by Augustus, who also has mystic knowledge. Mystic knowledge we will return to.

Thereafter topics are touched on that one expects in a thoroughly Christianised narrative; like, for example, the fate of St John the Evangelist (exile, recall from exile, disappearance: 10.48, 59; 11.2); persecutions of Christians under Trajan (11.2, 5) Decius (12.25, xvii—in lacuna), Numerian (12.35) or Diocletian (12.45); martyrs, like Ignatius and the five women (11.10), Babylas (12.35), Kosmas and Damian (12.36) or Gelasinos the mime (12.50). But these episodes, which may well ultimately derive from Eusebius, are narrated extremely briefly and make up a very small proportion of the narrative as a whole, and there is nothing that adds up to a history of the Early Church. Note too that, in connection with the martyrs that are mentioned, a large number of them have connections with Antioch. Here as elsewhere Malalas is driven by his local interests.[10]

In Book 13, entitled emphatically 'The Time of the Emperor Constantine', appears the first Christian emperor, Constantine. In the wake of a victory over barbarians in which he carried the standard with a cross that he had seen in a dream he 'destroyed the temples of the Hellenes…and opened up the Christian churches…after fasting he took instruction and was baptised by the bishop Sylvester…and so the emperor Constantine became a Christian' (13.2). He sent his mother to look for the 'precious Cross' and when she had found the five nails 'from that time the affairs of the Christians prospered in every way' (13.5). What does Malalas mean by this? That pagan temples were closed: this happened, according to Malalas, under Constantine, Theodosius I (13.37) and Honorius (13.47). That only Christians were appointed as governors and senior civil servants (13.4, 10, 26) in both Antioch and Constantinople, under both Constantine and Jovian. And, that churches were built. Malalas being Malalas, this means especially the Great Church in Antioch (13.3, 14, 35) while in Constantinople, although almost every other structure one could think of for the newly revamped capital is listed, Constantine apparently made no provision for a church.

This arguably has set the pattern for Malalas' treatment of ecclesiastical matters. He is interested in the bureaucracy and the fabric—this is a carry-over from what we see in the rest of the chronicle where he

[10] As discussed in Jeffreys (1990A) 54–66.

is interested in the creation of provinces and administrative districts. So Malalas pragmatically notices the four ecumenical councils: Nicaea (council of 318 bishops; 13.11), Constantinople (150 bishops; 13.40; under Theodosius I), Ephesus (240 bishops; 14.25) and Chalcedon (630 bishops; 14.30). But the notice is simply of how many were present, with one sentence, at the most, on the subject: Constantinople: on the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit; Ephesus: against Nestorius, to depose him from his see; Chalcedon: nothing. Despite the apparently totally Christianised form of his book, Malalas is not interested in any theological debate or doctrinal discussion.

Malalas notices the appointment and where appropriate the deposition of bishops: intermittently for Constantinople and occasionally of the pope in Rome, but most notably for Antioch where a reasonably full list can be extracted, particularly for the later 5th c. But even the particularly turbulent ten years from 476 are recorded with minimum detail of factional issues, and even less of doctrinal ones (15.6). It is the hierarchical and administrative fact that has interested him.

I have already commented that Malalas records some saints, i.e. martyrs; this pattern is maintained. Most continue to have some connection with Antioch and the surrounding area: Babylas (12.35), Drosine (11.10), Ignatius (10.32, 11.10), Iuventinus and Maximinus (13.19), Marinus (18.49), Symeon the Stylite (14.37). Many of these have shrines, the construction of some of which (e.g. Symeon the Stylite) Malalas records.

The construction of civic buildings is one of Malalas' main indices of a competent emperor. He regularly lists the building and repair by emperors of basilicas, baths, porticoes, cisterns, harbours, granaries, aqueducts.[11] Church construction is just one further element in this list, as part of appropriate imperial duties for the care of an emperor's subjects, but it is not a particularly prominent one. We have already seen that Malalas' record of church building in Constantinople is remarkable more for its omissions than its inclusions, and something of this pattern continues throughout the chronicle—though that is not entirely fair. Theodosius I (14.11) is recorded as having built the Great Church in Alexandria and 'all the city's churches' in Nicomedia. As part of this imperial civic duty in an ecclesiastical context, Malalas also records imperial participation in supplicatory liturgical activity (as with

[11] Moffatt (1990).

Justin after a major Constantinoplitan earthquake; 17.30), or dedicating votives in churches (as Justinian did with his robe and jewels in Antioch; 18.45). I take this again to be an expression of acceptance that such activities are part of the imperial role, part of the fabric of the social structure within which Malalas was functioning and which he was not questioning; there is no particular interest in the theological underpinning to these activities.

So Malalas shows a level of basic recognition of a religious environment, which is Christian: he would probably not be alone in this mind-set.

None of the comments made so far suggest that Malalas has any sectarian affiliation. Sectarianism does not seem to be an issue. He notes the sectarian affiliation of some emperors, particularly with reference to Arianism, the vagueness of whose definition is discussed elsewhere in this volume. Constantius and Valens are both *exakionites*, i.e. Arians (13.17, 13.34); Valens 'thoroughly maltreated the Christians' and handed over the Great Church of Constantinople to the Arians; persecution of Arians by Leo is noted (14.41) and the final confiscation of their churches (18.84; in 538). Malalas bandies the term 'Nestorian' around as an insult for two bishops, one of Antioch (Stephen, 15.6; *ca.* 476) and one of Constantinople (Makedonios, 16.11; 512), with no deep sense of meaning. Whether or not Malalas has Monophysite leanings can be debated, and has been, but the issue has been more in the minds of 19th c. commentators than in the reality of Malalas' text.[12]

All in all, Malalas' chronicle reads to me like the product of the attitudes and assumptions of a writer who accepts the Christianised environment in which he operates as a fact of every-day life—the churches, the processions, councils and even the varieties of sectarian affiliation and their possibilities for disagreement; one might say there is an apathy, an indifference, a lack of concern. None of the topics I have been listing out take up very much space in Malalas' overall scheme.

But there are two areas of religiosity where I am sure one is right to feel Malalas' pulse quickening and his interest levels rise. The first of these includes his pragmatic interest in what we might think of as the underbelly of the Byzantine Christianised society: magic, rituals and talismans, theurgic manifestations, a class of people called *mystikoi*

[12] Croke (1990) 15–16.

(initiates) and the pagan oracles that foreshadowed Christ and the Trinity, the nearest I think one gets to theological speculation in his chronicle. The second area concerns his millennial interests. In both areas more attention than might be expected is allotted these, so both must indicate heightened interest.

Rituals and talismans. The rituals include the annual door-knocking carried out in Antioch—explained as a local memory of the Argives' search for Io who had fled to Mount Silpios; or the banging of drums in the streets in memory of an incident in Trajan's almost entirely fictitious Parthian War (11.4). Some refer to simple, apotropaic measures, such as the setting up of talismans against mosquitoes (10.51), or against scorpions, or against the North Wind—all attributed to Apollonios of Tyana, but also explaining a local Antiochene custom. In the case of the mosquitoes, there were ritual elements as well—busts of Ares with suspended shields and daggers were to be carried round to chants of 'Out with the mosquitoes'. So there are elements of magic. More magic would seem to be involved in what one must probably consider theurgic manifestations and displays. What is involved is rather vague and unspecific, but enabled, according to Malalas, Picus Zeus to seduce many women (1.13).

The *mystikoi* are puzzling. The term is applied to a disparate set of individuals, ranging from Hephaistos (1.15), Perseus (2.11), Dionysos (2.15), Endymion (3.9), Joshua (4.2), Sampson (4.12), Kirke (5.9), Cleopatra (9.10), Augustus (10.6), and finally—after a long gap—Maurianos (15.16), who lived in the reign of Zeno. According to Anne-Marie Bernardi, in a recent study of this phenomenon, these can be divided into three groups.[13] Those who possess some superior wisdom, like Hephaistos or Dionysos; those who were capable of working some powerful magic (which seemed to be the attraction for Malalas), such as Perseus and the use he made of the Gorgon's head; and then miracle-workers, such as Iannes and Iambres who performed miracles in front of Pharaoh (3.13). Striking in the activities attributed to these figures is the place given to appeals to the Sun and the Moon—Io, for example, is the secret name of the Moon (2.6) and the secret name of the Sun was engraved on the base of a statue in the Baths of Zeuxippos in Constantinople (12.20). What is meant by *mystikos* is not at all clear to me. Anne-Marie Bernardi translates this as 'initiés', 'initiates':

[13] Bernardi (2004).

but initiates in what? And to translate *mystikos* as 'mystic' or 'mystic wonder-worker' also runs away from the issue. The last *mystikos* mentioned is a certain Maurianos, who made a prediction about the length of the reign of Zeno. This Maurianos is perhaps Malalas' informant on this topic. There is no very conclusive argument for this, other than that Malalas very often seems to have access to texts in recent circulation (Eustathios of Epiphaneia is a case in point) and to have broken up collections of material and inserted excerpts at strategic points throughout his narrative. Earthquake notices and dates from Adam or Creation are instances of this.[14] In PLRE III *mystikos* is translated in connection with Maurianos as astrologer: perhaps this is the way to go.

All this adds up, as far as I can see, to an interest by Malalas in dabbling in a stream, perhaps an undercurrent, of Gnostic or hermetic thought—this is an extremely vague concept, and it is not my intention here to make it any more precise. This level of interest in the chronicle is even clearer in connection with the pagan oracles, which I mentioned earlier. These are verse prophecies attributed to a variety of classical authors—amongst them Plato and Sophocles. Some of these are genuine products, as we now know, of the oracles of Claros and Didyma.[15] All circulated as part of the Tübingen Theosophy. The version that Malalas seems to have used was produced in the reign of Anastasius, perhaps in 502/3.[16] Part of the Theosophy and sharing its hermetic undercurrents are the extensive Orphic fragments, quoted together with an *hermeneia*, and given much space in Malalas' chronicle.[17]

All this seems to be of greater intellectual interest to Malalas than Christian theology, whether orthodox or heretical. This is an alternative theology, as it were, or a semi-theological set of interests, which he has interspersed throughout his narrative of world events.

But the issues that, it seems to me, have really driven Malalas are his millennial calculations. Many of the resonances are lost from Malalas' text.[18] From other sources we can see that it was an important issue in the reign of Anastasius to calculate when the year 6000 from Creation

[14] Jeffreys (1990A) 111–20, 155–60.
[15] Robert (1968) and (1971).
[16] Beatrice (2001) lv.
[17] Kern (1922) frags. 62, 65, 233, 299; cf. Beatrice (2001) 24, 38.
[18] Jeffreys (1990B).

would occur; this would usher in the final phase of the world, and would imply—probably—also Christ's Second Coming and possibly also the appearance of the Anti-Christ. I refer you to the thorough study by Wolfram Brandes of the various manifestations around the year 500, in both Greek and Syriac writers, of agitation that the year 6000 was approaching.[19] Brandes' argument ultimately is to explain the epithet *dikoros* in connection with Anastasius as a piece of *Kaisarkritik*—eyes of different colour are a mark of the Anti-Christ. Brandes duly notes that Malalas has a millennial thread to his chronology. In fact in Malalas' text there are indications that he recognised that 491 A.D. was a possible crunch year and also that something might happen at some point in the reign of Anastasius (this must be the point of Anastasius' dream that 14 years were wiped away; 16.20). But Brandes fails to take up the point that Malalas' millenniarism was idiosyncratic:[20] for Malalas the year 6000 was the year of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection, and thus well in the past—mankind's redemption had been completed long ago. All other calculations put the Incarnation in the year 5500, leading to the expectation that the year 6000, and the next phase of human existence, would occur some time around 500 A.D. There are two other points that are not often noticed. The first is that Malalas was not unsupported in his idiosyncracy. Hesychius Illustrios of Miletos, more or less a contemporary of Malalas, also took this line. There survives a fragment of a sermon in which he argues for Christ's Crucifixion in the year 6000, supported by Phalek's appearance in the year 3000, in the mid-point of time exactly as in Malalas.[21] Hesychius also wrote a history, which we know now only through a précis in Photius' *Bibliotheca* (cod. 69). It has the most tantalising resemblances to the structure of Malalas' chronicle. The second point is that Malalas' millennial chronology is somehow tied up with the year 528. It is at this point that he puts his last big chronological excursus, with its reiteration that the 6th millennium had long since passed. It is not easy to see why this year should be singled out for emphasis in this way. It could be that Easter Sunday in that year fell on 26 March, the date that Malalas gives for Christ's Crucifixion—the normal Byzantine date

[19] Brandes (1997).

[20] Beatrice (2001) xxxix, while perceptive in so many matters, also does not explore this issue.

[21] Dindorf (1831) lii–liii.

(as given in Synkellos' chronicle) being 25 March.[22] It could also be that in this year took place the sixth calamitous earthquake to afflict Antioch, which led to a change, by imperial command, of the city's official name to Theoupolis, supported by the discovery of an oracle that the city 'should not be called the city of Antiochos' (18.29). But although the reasons for the year's significance are not clear, it obviously had major importance for Malalas.

Thus I would like to argue that Malalas' apparently Christian world chronicle has embedded in it a whole series of strands of barely Christian beliefs and superstitions, which had him, the chronicler of an apparently Christian society, in thrall, whilst Christian doctrines and heresies left him unmoved.

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[22] E.g. Mosshammer (1984) 391.26–7.

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JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S AUDIENCES AND HIS ACCUSATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LAXITY

Isabella Sandwell

Abstract

This article seeks to investigate the question of religious apathy in the 4th c. by looking at the writings of John Chrysostom and Libanius. It will first explore the accusations of religious laxity that Chrysostom makes against his audience and the picture that Chrysostom's writings give of the attitudes of his audience towards religion. It will then turn to look in broader terms at the place given to religion in the 4th c. by exploring the writings of Libanius on this matter. By taking into account this broader perspective, this article will suggest that Chrysostom is unfair to accuse his audiences of religious laxity and that instead what we see is that they disagreed with him over the extent to which religion should permeate their lives.

Introduction[1]

The question of the place of religion in 4th c. society is a very pertinent one. Christian texts from the period can give the impression that religion in general was of central importance. At the same time, recent trends in the study of Late Antiquity have emphasised the centrality of religion and the impact of new Christian ideals and models for living.[2] Other trends in the study of Late Antiquity have, in contrast, questioned the centrality of religion and have particularly questioned

[1] The references to Libanius' letters are marked out as coming from either Norman's Loeb translations or Bradbury's translations for Liverpool's Translated Texts for Historians series by the prefix B. or N. Translations of John Chrysostom are from the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers series, often with my own adaptations.

[2] This view is most obviously promulgated by Peter Brown in a number of works. See Brown (1971), (1972), (1982), (1992), (1995) and (1998).

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), pp. 523–542

whether the large numbers of Christian texts that remain are representative of the period as a whole. The issue of how far religion mattered to people in the 4th c. is thus still very much an open one that needs some thought devoted to it.

One of the problems with the way that debate about this question has been set up in the past is that when people talk about the importance of religion in Late Antiquity what they usually mean is the importance of Christianity. Graeco-Roman religions are only really talked about in terms of how far they survive the growth of Christianity and the processes of Christianisation that are seen to take place in the period. The problem with this prioritisation of Christianity is that when we come to reassess the place of religion in the 4th c. we tend to assume that we only need to assess the importance and centrality of this one particular religion. This is rather different from assessing the importance of religion and religious attitudes as a whole and as a result has rather restricted the way these issues have been debated in the past.

In this short essay we shall explore some of these issues by looking at the works of two writers based in Antioch in Syria—John Chrysostom and Libanius. John Chrysostom was priest and preacher in Antioch between A.D. 386–97, before being called to become Bishop of Constantinople.[3] As with other Christian leaders who have left their sermons to us he is an interesting figure for understanding the importance of religion (Christianity) to his audiences. On the one hand his works can be counted among those that give an impression of the centrality of Christianity. All of his sermons are focused directly on religious matters and in them we see him trying to educate his audience about Christian ideals for living. On the other hand, however, he can also give some evidence that Christianity was not as important to people as he would have liked, as we see him dealing with the typical 4th c. problem of audiences who were apparently resistant to his teachings and who constantly need to be rebuked. Chrysostom's sermons can thus help us to begin to answer the question of how important Christianity was in the 4th c. To go beyond this, however, and to seek to understand how important religion was more generally we also need to take into account a non-Christian view. We shall thus also spend a little time considering the writings of the 'pagan' teacher and orator Libanius who was born in Antioch and who lived, worked and wrote

[3] On Chrysostom see Kelly (1995) and Mayer and Allen (2000).

there between A.D. 354 and his death in the 390s.[4] Assessing his view of the place of religion in 4th c. society will give us a broader perspective from which to approach the questions we have set ourselves.

During his time as priest and preacher in Antioch Chrysostom found himself constantly having to exhort, nag and berate his audiences. Whereas he wanted them to be looking to the life to come, they were focused on the present life. Whereas he wanted them to attend church eagerly every day and to listen to his sermons with enthusiasm, they were running off to the circus or to festivals or talking about worldly matters while in church. Whereas he wanted them to devote their lives to charitable works and to live in modesty and frugality, they continued to display their wealth and to value expensive clothes and houses above all else. As a result, he often accuses them of religious 'laxity' or 'listlessness'—*rathumia*. The sermons of John Chrysostom thus reveal to us the tensions between the ideals of the Christian Church and the way that ordinary Christians were actually living their lives. They reveal, or at least appear to reveal, not only Chrysostom's ideals but also the views of ordinary Christians who often appear to have had little interest in religion and who were very different from the 'high achievers' of Christianity who often dominate work on this period. From this point of view, the 4th c. does not appear as a time of increased importance of religion but as a time when large numbers of people were apathetic or indifferent to Christianity or who saw Christianity as something they only had to adopt in name.

Before exploring this position in more detail there are a number of points that we have to take into consideration. Firstly, we need to bear in mind the problematic nature of sermons as a source: what makes them so appealing to the historian is also what makes them deceptive. Because the sermons we have appear on the surface to be verbatim accounts of the words spoken to mass audiences, they seem to offer a more direct form of access to the opinions of large civic communities than perhaps any other ancient source. However, this is not necessarily the case. It can in fact often be very hard to judge which sermons do arise from notes taken by stenographers as Chrysostom preached, and which are versions worked up by him after delivery, or written treatises that are presented in the form of a spoken sermon (as in the

[4] On Libanius see Liebeschuetz (1972) 1–16 and Wintjes (2005).

Commentary on Isaiah (SC 304)).[5] In any case, the written versions of sermons that we have are often carefully crafted, rhetorical works just like any other text left to us from Antiquity. For example, Chrysostom sometimes exaggerated and caricatured the failings of his audiences for rhetorical effect and to make obvious the error of their ways. This is particularly clear in the way that Chrysostom represents the social status of his audience as he tends to give the impression of a community polarised between the very rich and the very poor; he chastises those he called 'the rich' for their failure to help those he characterised as the poorest beggars.[6] Scholarly opinion now holds that this dramatic polarisation is not accurate and that the greatest proportion of Chrysostom's audiences would probably have been the relatively well off traders and others occupying the more 'middle' classes. We must be aware that in many of his representations of his audiences Chrysostom was presenting them in starker terms than was really necessary and that the gap he presents between his ideals of religiosity for his audiences and what they were actually doing might not have been as wide as he suggests.

The second point that we need to remember is that to talk of religious apathy and indifference is, in a way, to accept Chrysostom's position that there is one ideal model for being Christian, against which people can be compared. The failings that Chrysostom describes are not objective and universal but are only defined in relation to what Chrysostom expected and so were part of the ideology of the Church, part of its attempt to persuade people that its way of viewing the world was the only and the correct one.[7] As a result we need to wonder whether Chrysostom's image of what Christians should be like is a measure that we should accept. This paper will argue that what we see in Chrysostom's audience, as far as we can understand their position, is not necessarily a group of people who were religiously apathetic or indifferent in the sense of failing to meet a religious ideal or to be interested at all in religion. Instead it will suggest that they simply had a different idea from Chrysostom about the place religion should have in their lives and the extent to which being Christian should impact on

[5] Goodall (1979) 62–67. Baur (1959) 206 saw sermons as pre-composed literary works. For evidence of post delivery revision of sermons, see Gignac (1998) and Boismard and Lamouille (1993). See also Sandwell (2007) 51–2.

[6] Kyrtatas (1988) 102–107 and Mayer (1998) 123.

[7] For further discussion of these issues, see Sandwell (2007) 12–17.

them. What, from Chrysostom's point of view, might appear as religious apathy or indifference might, from the point of view of his audiences, have been seen as disagreement over the very demanding model of being Christian that Chrysostom set them. I shall also suggest, by using the writings of Libanius, that in this attitude Chrysostom's Christian audiences might have held a view shared by many non-Christians too, who realised that easy social and political relations in the 4th c. relied on religion and religious differences taking a back seat.

Chrysostom and the Religious Laxity of his Audience

John Chrysostom had very high expectations for his audiences. He wanted their Christianity to dominate every aspect of their lives and allowed little room for any neutral space in which they could exist that was not dominated by religious concerns.[8] For a Christian preacher such as Chrysostom this privileging of the religious entailed that he refocus the aspirations of his audience on the heavenly existence they were to have after death. He wanted them to see themselves as citizens of heaven who were simply biding their time in the present, earthly world. In one example Chrysostom stated:

> If you are a Christian, no earthly city is yours. Of our City "the Builder and Maker is God". Though we may gain possession of the whole world, we are strangers and sojourners in it all! We are enrolled in heaven and our citizenship is there! (*Hom. de Stat.* 17.12 quoting Hebrews 11:10 (PG 49.178)).[9]

This was no simple rhetorical statement of loyalty to God and his kingdom but was intended to transform every aspect of the life of the Christian. Once Chrysostom's audiences accepted that the present life was only temporary and inconsequential then they should be able to see that worldly wealth and luxury had no value and so would easily be able to give to the poor (*Hom in John.* 42.4 (PG 59.243) and *Hom. In Matt.* 19.2 (PG 57.275)).[10] They should also transform their negative attitudes to death and so should no longer be concerned about

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[8] For more detailed arguments on this see Sandwell (2004) 35–58 and (2007) 125–53.

[9] See also *Hom. de Stat.* 5.9 (PG 49.72); *In Ep. ad Rom. Hom.* 23 (PG 60.618) and *In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.*16.5 (PG 61.518).

[10] Leyerle (2001) 44–60 and Meeks (1993) 62.

the sickness or death of a child as this was only death in the earthly world and the child would be resurrected in heaven (*In Ep. ad Coloss. Hom.* 2 (PG 62.315)). Finally, recognition of the existence of heaven and hell was also intended by Chrysostom to transform the behaviour of his audiences in that it would make them realise that the sins of this life would be punished and virtue rewarded (*In Ep. ad 1 Cor. Hom.* 4.4 (PG 61.31–32)).[11]

The behaviour that Chrysostom expected of his audiences in this present life was that which would be a preparation for and image of the perfect life that they would lead in the world to come. He wanted them to live the heavenly life on earth in the way that the monks did.[12] He demanded that those in his audience get as close as they possibly could to the ideals of chastity, frugality, modesty and charity (*Hom. de Stat.* 17.13 and 14 (PG 49.178–179)). At the same time, they were supposed to give up any concern with worldly cares of business (*Hom. de Stat.* 10.2 (PG 49.112)),[13] and to give up any participation in worldly amusements such as the circus, the theatre or civic festivals (*Hom. in Acta Apost.* 42.4 (PG 60.301)).[14] Instead they were supposed to carry out every action in their lives, however mundane or seemingly 'non-religious', 'for God' (*Hom. in Kal.* 3 (PG 48.956–957)). In this way Chrysostom hoped to make a total break between the Christian present and the non-Christian past of his audiences and to introduce them to a totally distinct, religious way of being. According to Chrysostom's ideals at least, being religiously Christian at the end of the 4th c. was a demanding business because religion was equated with every aspect of life and had to be publicly displayed at all times.[15]

Chrysostom's audiences, however, appear to have found it hard to live up to these demands. In fact Chrysostom often gives a picture of his audiences as far more devoted to worldly concerns of the present life than to spiritual matters:

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[11] See also *In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.* 9.4, 10 and 22 (PG 61.464–5, 465–74 and 551); *Hom. de Stat.* 1.20 and 7.4 (PG 49.27–8 and 93–4) and *In Ep. ad 1 Cor. Hom.* 9.1–3 (PG 61.75–77) and 14.5–6 (61.117–118).

[12] Hartney (2004) 11 and 28.

[13] See also *Hom. de. Stat.* 10.1, 12.2, 15.7 and 20.3 (PG 49.111, 127, 156 and 199).

[14] See also *Hom. in Matt.* 7.7 and 37.6 (PG 57.81 and 426–27); *Contra Ludos et theatra* 2 (PG 56.267) and *De Dav. et Saule* 3 (PG 54.696–697). See also Vandenburgh (1955) 36–41 and Leyerle (2001) 1–74.

[15] See Sandwell (2007) 125–53.

> For if you go into the forum, if you enter a house, go into the streets, into the soldiers' quarters, into inns, taverns, ships, islands, palaces, courts of justice, council chambers, you shall everywhere find anxiety for things present and belonging to this life, and each man labouring for these things whether gone or coming, travelling or staying at home, voyaging, tilling lands, in the fields, in the cities, in a word, all (*Hom. in John.* 38 (PG 136.4)).

This is almost a total inversion of the ideal Chrysostom expressed in his *Sermon On the Kalends* of his audiences doing all for God. Rather than turning to spiritual matters and the life to come Chrysostom's audiences were, according to Chrysostom, letting the present life exert its influence in every area. On one occasion Chrysostom contrasts the zeal—*spoudē*—that his audiences should show to reading the Holy Scripture and attending church with the great enthusiasm that they show for 'secular festivals'—*biōtikēn panēgurin*—and complains of the way that the latter is often greater than the former (*Hom. in Gen.* 29.5 (PG 53.262)). On other occasions he often complains of the way his audiences rush off to the theatre, the race-courses and civic festivals and so give 'up the chance to hear the spiritual—*pneumatikēn*—discourse' (*Catéchèse* 6.1 (SC 50.216)).[16] People might be distracted from listening to Chrysostom's preaching because they were talking about the 'race course' and Chrysostom asks if they aren't ashamed to be 'so riveted by present things—*tois parousin*' (*In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.* 9.3 (PG 61.462)). Chrysostom also describes more mundane aspects of the present life as distracting his audiences as often he has caught them in 'worldly conversation'—*biōtikōn dialexōn*—about such things as buying and selling, politics, family and private affairs (*Catéchèse* 1.46 (SC 50.132). Because of this tendency for people to gossip about politics, work and family life while at church, church could become like a vintners shop, the baths, the stage or a market place when it should have been 'a place of angels' (*In Ep. ad 1 Cor. Hom.* 36.8 (PG 61.313)). In a similar way the actual physical spaces of the city, the courts, the council chamber and the forum, were all places that could distract the Christian from spiritual contemplation and turn him towards 'earthly and corruptible' matters (*Hom. de Stat.* 10.2 (PG 49.112).[17]

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[16] See also *Hom. in Gen.* 6.1–5, 7.1–2 (PG 53.54–56 and 61–63); *Hom. de Stat.* 4.5 15.1 and 11 (PG 49.62, 153–54 and 158) and *Catéchèse* 6.16 (*SC* 50.223).

[17] See also *Hom. de Stat.* 10.1, 12.2 and 15.7 (PG 49.111, 127 and 156).

Because of this inability of his Christian audiences to live the true spiritual life Chrysostom often complained of their failure in their faith. As he says:

> I behold the mass of the Church prostrate now, as though it were a corpse, like a body just dead—here also all are faithful, but their faith is not active (*In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.* 27.4 (PG 61.588)).

This notion of the 'faithful with an inactive faith' is one way that Chrysostom conceives of his disappointment in his audiences. He accepts that they are 'believers' or 'Christians' in some sense, but questions the extent and depth of their religiosity by accusing them of inaction, laxity and laziness. For this reason he characterises the battle against listlessness as the battle 'within' in contrast to the battle with those outside Christianity (*In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.* 27.4 (PG 61.588)). On one occasion he blames this laxness on the favour Christianity now receives from imperial society. As he says, now 'we are in enjoyment of Peace, we are become supine and lax and have filled the church with countless evils, but when we were persecuted…' (*In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.* 26.4 (PG 61.580)). One area in which these accusations are found is in relation to the disposition of Chrysostom's audiences during his preaching and the church service more generally. Chrysostom often complains of the 'listlessness' or 'laxness'—*rathumia*—of his audience as they were often bored and lacked alertness. Chrysostom states that he is far less concerned if people come to hear his preaching after they have broken a fast than if they come in a state of listlessness—*to rathumein*—because a person in this state is 'an unprofitable hearer', he 'yawns, and is slack in attention, having his body here but his mind wandering elsewhere' (*Hom. de Stat.* 9.2 (PG 49.104)).[18] Similarly, he complains of the way that people in prayer are 'listless and negligent' and that while they adopt the posture of prayer their 'mind wanders everywhere…babbling all the while with' their 'mouth vainly and to no purpose' (*Hom. de Stat.* 20.3 (PG 49.199)). This listlessness could also take the form of people holding private conversations in church while they were supposed to be listening to the preacher.

> But suppose the penalty were exacted for our listlessness—*rathumias*—in our solemn assemblies what would our condition be? For this you cannot but know, that often while God Himself is addressing us all by His

[18] See also *Catéchèse* 6.1–2 (*SC* 50.216–7).

> prophet, we are holding frequent and long conversation with those near us about matters which in no way concern us (*Hom. de Stat*. 20.5 (PG 49.199–200)).[19]

Not listening to the preacher or reader was tantamount to not listening to God because he might be reading from or interpreting Holy Scripture and so for Chrysostom this was a most serious religious failing ('for do not suppose this offence is a small one') that showed total 'contempt' for God (*Hom. de Stat*. 20.5 (PG 49.200)). In fact, Chrysostom sees 'stirring up' those who are 'too listless'—*rathumoterous*—and making 'zealous'—*spoudaios*—'someone who was previously indifferent—*rathumos*'—as one of the main goals of his preaching (*Hom. de Stat*. 1.2 (PG 49.17)) and *Hom in Gen*. 54.6 (PG 54.472)). The truly zealous Christian would heed Chrysostom's exhortation to 'spend the whole day long in prayers and confessions, in reading and compunction' and this 'zeal' would then direct the Christian to 'spiritual things' (*Catéchèse* 1.46 (SC 50.132)). Zealousness of religious attitude is the converse of laxity and Chrysostom refers joyfully to situations where his audiences had achieved this state (*Hom. in Gen.* 15.1 29.5 (PG 53.118)).

On some occasions, Chrysostom places his exhortations against religious laxity and towards religious zealousness within the broader discussion of a religious laxity of a deeper nature—the denial of free will. In this way, religious laxity or listlessness could be a theological problem. The notion of free will was absolutely essential to Chrysostom and to the transformative power of his preaching because the whole notion that individuals could change and become better Christians was based on the notion that they had control over their actions. Even Augustine whose belief in original sin meant that he placed much greater emphasis on God's grace rather than human free will as the antidote to sin emphasised free will when preaching to uneducated Christians.[20] In the theology of Christians based in and around Antioch, the free will of the human individual to choose right or wrong had always been a central tenet of their theology as well as their practical Christianity and this tenet underlay all Chrysostom's preaching.[21] For Chrysostom Adam and Eve's decision to eat the apple was not a result of their

[19] See also *In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.* 9.3 (PG 61.462).
[20] Kleinberg (1987) 20–22.
[21] On this see Wallace-Hadrill (1982) chapters 6 and 7, and in particular 162–64.

flawed human nature but the first example of human laxity—*rathumia* (*Hom. in Gen.* 14.15, 15.15 and 16.13 (PG 53.115, 123 and 134)).[22]

Thus for Chrysostom every time an individual failed in their spiritual goals or committed a sin, this was a result of human laxity rather than of any quintessential human nature, of fate or of the power of demons (*Hom in Gen*. 22.5 (PG 53.187) and *In Ep. ad 1 Cor. Hom*. 14.5 and 22.7 (PG 61.117–118 and 186)). By emphasising his audience's ability to choose either laxity or zeal he thus undermined their attempts to deny responsibility for their actions. Conscience and free will have the 'effect of robbing us of any pleas that we fell into sin through ignorance instead of through sloth of spirit' (*Hom in Gen*. 5.6 (PG 53.50)). In his discussion of Christians who adhere to the observance of the days in his sermon *On the Kalends*, Chrysostom argues that these individuals refuse to accept responsibility for their own laxity—*rathumia*—on an evil day but instead say this happened because the day was ill-omened (*Hom. in Kal*. 2 (PG 48.955)). This inability to accept responsibility for their laxity then becomes a laxity of an even more serious kind. These individuals who observe the days live in 'laziness and wickedness' and allow the 'evil demon' to draw them into an even greater laxity because they never accept responsibility for their own actions and so will never be compelled to do good or to give up evil from their own will.

We have seen so far that Chrysostom often spoke of laxity as a problem among those who were already members of the community of the faithful in some way. At other times, however, the laxity of a person can be so serious that it stops them becoming a Christian in the first place. It is characteristic of those who refuse to be baptised and Chrysostom talks of how he has 'urged the uninitiated of the congregation to respond to their spiritual calling by shaking off all drowsiness and sloth' by being baptised and of 'the indifference and hesitation of the catechumens to receive the sacrament of regeneration…' (*Hom. in Gen.* 12.1 (PG 53.98) and *Catéchèse* 9.4 (SC 366.94)). Laxness was also the chief characteristic of those outside the church—'pagans' ('children of the Greeks' in Chrysostom). Because they don't accept the teachings of Genesis about the creation of the sun by God but instead treat it as a deity he describes them as a 'slothful—*rathumia*—people inclined to error' (*Hom in Gen*. 6.12 and 3.10 (PG 53.58 and 35)). Religious *rathu-*

[22] Hill (1986–1992) translation of Chrysostom's sermons on Genesis, 15.

mia could thus be a state that stopped people accepting the Christian message in the first place and that was associated with being outside Christianity or even with being 'pagan'. In extreme circumstances, laxness could become a defining feature of the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian.

Other Approaches to the Place of Religion in the Fourth Century

For Chrysostom religious laxness or indifference was associated with a failure to live up to his ideals and a favouring of the present world that could endanger one's status as a Christian. This is how Chrysostom saw and presented the situation. What we now have to try to do is to understand the situation from the point of view of Chrysostom's audience. This is much harder as we have no direct source for them. We can try to achieve it by accepting the general picture of Chrysostom's audiences as doing something different from his expectations but by refusing Chrysostom's negative interpretation of this and trying to find another way to view the situation. To do this we first need to remind ourselves of the context in which Chrysostom's audience were living. We need to remember first of all that the Christian communities we are dealing with in the 4th c. were large ones made up of many converts of convenience. As Markus has shown, on Constantine's conversion, large numbers of people 'converted' to Christianity simply because this was seen to be the thing to do. At the same time, as Markus has also shown, the end of persecutions caused a kind of crisis of identity for the Church, as it now had to adjust to having state support and a much more central role in society as a whole.[23]

In the 4th c., the Church was thus placed in radically different circumstances from those it was used to and so we see new ways of understanding relationships between religion, state and society being worked out in different ways throughout the Roman empire. This would have had a clear impact on individuals too, as people of different religious allegiances had to work out how to live and work side-by-side. Both Christian and non-Christian members of the elite served on civic councils (such as that in Antioch), in court circles and in the imperial

[23] Markus (1990) 19–63.

bureaucracy. There were also families that contained Christians and non-Christians and marrying across the religious divide was quite normal (even a preacher such as Chrysostom accepted that it happened). Lower down the social spectrum, daily interaction between Christian and non-Christian would have been common both through intermarriages and in daily working life. All these problems would have been made more pressing by the fact that so many areas of daily social life had traditionally been interwoven with the old Graeco-Roman religions. This was particularly the case with the traditional civic festivals that punctuated life in the cities of the eastern empire and that large numbers of people still took part in, whatever their religious loyalties. It is for these reasons that we have to remind ourselves to consider the importance of religion generally in the 4th c., not just of Christianity. We have to ask not only how far people let Christianity impact on their lives but also how far they considered their lives to be dominated by religion in the first place.

We have seen that the way that Chrysostom tackled these issues was to demand of his audiences that religion permeate every aspect of their lives and that they prioritise religious loyalties over any other commitments. From the writings of Libanius, however, we can gain a very different view of how others in Antioch might have thought about these issues. Libanius' writings depict a quite complex picture of his attitude to religion and one that can often be hard to understand. It has been said by scholars in the past that he was a supporter of traditional civic religion, that his religion was 'only literary', that he gives no evidence of having any personal religious sentiments and also that he was a supporter of Julian and his religious 'revival'.[24] Scholarly opinion has thus vacillated between denying Libanius any one true religious position and creating a simplistic picture of him as a religious traditionalist who supported Julian's religious revival in a straightforward way. I would argue that neither approach does justice to the situation because they both assume that we should be looking for one true Libanius in his writings and one true Libanian view of religion, and that if we do not find this then we can deny him any relationship with the actual religious situation around him. If we take a different approach and instead

[24] Petit (1955) 191 and 193 (literary and cultural) and 191–216 (civic and traditional) and Festugière (1959) 229 and Norman (2000) 171 fn. 5; Liebeschuetz (1972) 11 and Wöhrle (1995) 71–73 and 76–82.

suggest that what is interesting in Libanius' writings is precisely the way that each work is adjusted to its specific context and says what is strategic and useful for that context we can find a very different view of Libanius.

In this view, no one work or set of works by Libanius is privileged over another as revealing the true Libanius. Rather than representing one cohesive view of his own religion, Libanius' writings can be seen as 'playing the religious game' in order to achieve the best outcome at any particular moment.[25] His Julianic orations, not surprisingly, support Julian's religious revival but he was also able to argue for a range of much more novel approaches to religion in the 4th c. as and when it was useful to do so. Thus, when Libanius does write about religious issues one of his underlying concerns is often that of the place religious matters should occupy in society. He often uses the opposition of the public and private spheres to make arguments about the extent to which spheres of life should be considered religious and about the extent to which religious difference between Christians and non-Christians should be an issue. Here it is also significant that Libanius is speaking to us as someone from the traditions of Graeco-Roman religion and from a world that was used to religion being intertwined in everyday life and to most people sharing the same religious allegiance (to the traditional gods). Thus again he gives us a very different perspective from that offered by Chrysostom. While Libanius' point of view can hardly be directly aligned with that of Chrysostom's audiences he can tell us something about the kind of world they were acting in and so can give us a view into how they might have thought about the place of religion in their lives that is different from Chrysostom's idealistic preaching.

The issue of the place of religion is raised by Libanius when he has to address Christian emperors, in his orations to Julian or about Julian's reign, when speaking about what had once been traditional aspects of civic religion and when defending either Christians or non-Christians from persecution. At times Libanius presents Graeco-Roman religion as, ideally at least, occupying its traditional place in relation to state and civic life. In his *Oration* 11 *In Praise of Antioch*, he gives an extended discussion of the myths of the divinities connected with Antioch and

[25] For further discussion of this revised approach to the writings of Libanius, see Sandwell (2007) 6–10, 20–27, 91–120 and 216–25.

in his Julianic orations he praises both Julian's restoration of traditional religion and his restoration of cities.[26] Such works can give the impression that Libanius cared very much about traditional religion and wanted it to extend into every aspect of civic life as it had once done.

Before accepting this picture in a straightforward way, however, we need to bear in mind that these are precisely the kind of views that we would expect in orations delivered to or in praise of Julian and in a panegyric of his home city. At other times, Libanius could express very different views. On occasion Libanius seems quite happy to accept that civic festivals and the temples of Antioch were losing their explicitly 'religious' aspects. His *Oration* 9 *In Praise of the Kalends* (the New Year festival), praises the festival for binding men together and providing a communal experience for them. Only at the very end of the oration does he finally turn to the blood sacrifice normally carried out at the festival, stating in the most neutral of terms that this no longer happens (*Or.* 9.18 (F.I.398)). He was also quite happy to allow that temples become buildings with 'secular' purposes only, such as tax collection, if this meant they could continue to remain standing once they became the object of Christian legislation and persecution (*Or.* 30.42 (F.III.110)). This can be contrasted to Chrysostom's representation of civic festivals as places where demons strut around the agora (*Hom in Kal.* 1 (PG 48.954)). On other occasions Libanius continues to see aspects of traditional civic festivals as 'religious' but does so only in a more privatised form. On a number of occasions he talks of the personal offerings that he made to the gods when more public offerings were not possible for some reason (*Or.* 1.222 (F.I.181) and (*Ep.* N.143.4 (F.1534)). On one occasion he also interprets the festival of Artemis as bringing him personal salvation from a collapsed doorway (*Or.* 5.45–52 (F.I.318–320)). One might argue that this slippage of traditional religion into the private and personal sphere was inevitable in a period of increased Christianisation and anti-'pagan' legislation such as the 4th c. However, at times Libanius makes more active arguments for religion being a private matter both for Christians and non-Christians.

[26] *Or.* 11.63, 76, 84, 94, 124 and 125 (F.I.456, 461, 464, 467, 476–77); *Or.* 12.69 (F.II.34); *Or.* 13.47 (F.II.80) and *Or.* 18.126–27 (F.II.290).

On a number of occasions, he suggests that religion was something that should not intervene in public life because it should be confined to the private sphere. In his *Oration* 30 *In Defence of the Temples* written in the 380s Libanius uses the distinction between the personal religious choices of emperors and their public policies to argue for religious toleration. He contrasts the way that Constantine 'thought it to his own advantage to recognise some other as a god'—*ēgēsamenos hautō lusitelein heteron tina nomizein theon*—with Constantius' much more far-reaching intervention in traditional public religion by closing temples and banning sacrifice (*Or.* 30.6 (F.III.90)). Libanius then praised Theodosius and Julian for following the better example of Constantine in not seeking to impose their personal religious beliefs on the public through any program of enforced conversion (*Or.* 30.53 (F.III.116–117)). Theodosius did not persecute those 'who held a belief contrary to his own'—*tous enantiōs tautē tōn hupēkoōn pros eauton echontas*—just as Julian had not done so (*Or.* 30.54 (F.III.117)).[27]

Conversely, Libanius criticises officials such as Cynegius, the Praetorian Prefect of the East who had allowed monks to destroy the temples during his office, for being 'zealous for personal things of their own'—*ta de idia sphisin espoudastai* (*Or.* 30.48, (F.III.114)) and allowing his private pleasures—*tas oikeias hēdonas*—to impact on public policy. It is clear from the context that these 'private pleasures' refer to his Christianity and that of his wife whom he allowed to influence him. In a similar fashion, Libanius could defend both the religious actions of peasants who worshipped the traditional gods in the Antiochene countryside and of Christian friends and family members by his use of the notion of the private sphere. He argues that Theodosius had not intended to persecute the Antiochene peasants for singing hymns and invoking the gods without sacrifice because he had not outlawed the 'way of life that takes place in private'—*tēn oikoi diaitan gignomenēn* (*Or.* 30.18 (F.III.96)).[28] When it came to defending Christians from persecution under Julian he uses a similar argument stating that 'if he differs from me in his opinion concerning the divine he harms himself only'—*ei diestēken hēmōn tēi peri to theion doxēi, blaptoi men an hauton* (*Ep.* N.103.2 (F.819.2)).[29] What Libanius' writings show is a view in which religion

[27] Compare this with Themistius' view that God made religious choice 'depend on individual inclination' (*Or.* 5.68a).

[28] See *Or.* 30.18–19 (F.III.96–97).

[29] See also *Ep.* B.130 (F.763).

(in his case Graeco-Roman religion) did not have to dominate every aspect of life but could be confined to the private sphere. For Libanius this was to some degree a matter of necessity as it was impossible for many traditional public and civic aspects of Graeco-Roman religion to continue to function as normal in the 4th c. However, his attitude also has wider relevance because it shows that there were points of view in existence in the 4th c. that allowed areas of life that had once been perceived as having religious significance to lose this significance.

Libanius' writings also show us a world in which a sense of tact governed how people referred to issues of religion and religious allegiance. People could put their religious allegiance in the background when this was necessary in order to work and live alongside others, so denying the potentially explosive issue of religious difference a central place in social interaction.[30] Libanius himself had a number of Christian friends and relatives and a number of letters to Christians survive among his writings. In these letters, Libanius usually made no reference at all to matters of religion that might be a point of conflict between himself and his correspondent. On the few occasions when he does do so, it was usually in a way that makes these religious concerns subservient to other concerns. In one letter to his ex-pupil Amphilocus Libanius refers to the fact that in 373/74 Amphilochus has been 'seized' by the Christians to hold the 'chair' of the bishopric of Iconium in Cappadocia. However, it immediately become clear that Libanius only referred to Amphilochus becoming a bishop in this way because it allowed him to praise the fact that Amphilochus would be practicing his eloquence again—even if it was in the form of preaching (*Ep.* N.144.2 (F.1543)). Thus although Amphilochius' Christianity is mentioned, Libanius pushed forward the love of eloquence that he and Amphilochius shared as the most important factor in their relationship.[31]

On a number of occasions Libanius defended Christian friends from persecution in the reign of Julian by arguing that their personal opinions about religion and about which god to honour were nobody else's business (*Ep.* N.103.2 (F.819.2)).[32] Libanius often emphasised that he was writing on behalf of these Christians primarily due to a connection

[30] On tact as the governing feature on socio-religious interaction in the 4th c., see Sandwell (2007) 18–20, 20–27 and 91–120.

[31] See also Libanius' letter to the Christian Firminus 3/2 when he retired from office to become a sophist (*Ep.* F.1048).

[32] See also *Ep.* B.130 (F.763) and *Ep.* B. 98.3 (F.1411).

of family or friendship and thus tones down the question of religion. This is the case with his two letters to Belaeus on behalf of Orion (*Ep.* N.103.1 (F.819) and *Ep.* B.130.1 (F.763)) and the one letter to Gaianus on behalf of Thalassius and Bassianus (*Ep.* N.105.2 (F.1364)). He started the two letters on behalf of Orion by emphasising the fact that Orion was an old friend of his and devoted the second paragraph of his letter on behalf of Thalassius and Bassanius to his family connections to them. Libanius was also quite happy to accept that people he knew might hide their allegiance to the Graeco-Roman gods under Christian emperors such as Constantius. At the end of one of his letters to his friend Modestus he refers to the way that Modestus had 'long admired the gods' during the reign of Constantius but that he had only been able to 'admit to them' openly once Julian came to power (*Ep.* B.74.5 (F.804)). For Libanius it was quite acceptable for people to put aside their true religious allegiances in this way when it was necessary to do so.

Conclusion

What Libanius' writings reveal is a world in which at times it was absolutely necessary to put aside religion and religious differences in order to be successful. In order for Christians and non-Christians to be friends, and in order for Christians to survive under Julian and for non-Christians to survive under Christian emperors and despite anti-'pagan' legislation, they had at times to place religion in the background and to emphasise other factors. At times, bonds of friendship, a shared love of eloquence or the need to get on in one's political career could be placed before religious concerns. This can be seen as akin to the way Libanius could argue for the continued secular use of temples at the expense of their religious functions. That others too shared this view of the place that religion should occupy in 4th c. society can be seen in a reference from Ammianus Marcellinus' *History*. On one occasion when discussing Julian's behaviour as a judge he states that while most of the time Julian was fair he was sometimes 'untimely' or 'tactless'—*intempestivus*—because at inappropriate moments—*tempore alieno*—he would ask which God the litigants worshipped—*quid quisque iurgantium coleret* (Amm. Marc. 22.10.2) (although Ammianus does go on to say that Julian never used a man's religion—*religio*—against them in court). Ammianus considered Julian's act to be tactless or untimely

because he sought to bring religious issues into a context in which they were not relevant—the courtroom. This again suggests that the majority of people wanted to put religious issues aside during ordinary 4th c. life and perhaps that it was only men such as John Chrysostom and Julian who sought to make them central.

It is clear that we cannot directly equate Libanius, an elite pagan orator, with Chrysostom's ordinary Christian audiences or assume that they would have exactly shared his views. However, what the evidence of Libanius and Ammianus does show is that it is likely that for many people the requirements of daily existence meant that they could not always make religion and religious allegiance absolutely central to their lives. This can give us a point of view from which to understand the behaviour of Chrysostom's audiences that does not involve accepting his judgement that they were religiously listless or failing in their Christianity. Rather, we can see that many people at this time considered themselves to be Christian but simply did not see religion as something that should dominate their whole lives. It simply wasn't practical or possible for these people to live the kind of spiritual lives Chrysostom demanded of them. It would be wrong to describe this as religious apathy because many of these people clearly thought of themselves as Christian. It was simply that they did not accept Chrysostom's understanding of the extent to which this Christianity should permeate their whole lives.[33] They saw being Christian as something that at times could be kept as a matter of personal belief, separate from other aspects of their life. They thus did not accept Chrysostom's demand that they should live the heavenly life on earth and had a different understanding of the extent to which Christianity should impact on their lives. In fact, we might suggest that they saw the secular life of this present world as compatible with their Christianity in a way that Chrysostom did not and so could easily allow the two to coexist where Chrysostom could not. From Chrysostom's very demanding point of view, this constituted religious apathy. From his audience's point of view, it was simply a different understanding of the way that their Christianity was to be defined and of how they understood the relationship of the sacred and secular spheres. They

[33] See also Maxwell (2007), which argues that Chrysostom's audiences disagreed with Chrysostom over what counted as Christian piety.

like many non-Christians were more realistic about finding ways to be religious that were less demanding and all-consuming and that allowed them to exist and to continue to function within 4th c. imperial society and its social structures.[34]

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Contra ludos et theatra (PG 56.263–70).
De Dav. et Saule = *De Davide et Saule* (PG 54.675–708).
Hom in Acta Apostt. = *Homiliae in Acta Apostolorum* (PG 60.6–384).
Hom. in Gen.= *Homiliae in Genesin* (PG 53–54.580).
Hom. in John = *Homiliae in Iohannem* (PG 59.7–488).
Hom. in. Kal. = *Homilia in Kalendas* (PG 48.951–62).
Hom in Matt. = *Homiliae in Mattaeum* (PG 57–58).
Hom. De. Stat. = *Homiliae de Statuis* (PG 49.6–222).
In Ep. ad Coloss. Hom. = *In Epistolam ad Colossensem* (PG 62.299–392).
In Ep. ad 1et 2 Cor. Hom. = *In Epistolam Primam et Secundam ad Corinthios* (PG 61.6–610).
In Ep. ad. Rom. Hom. = *In Epistolam ad Romanos* (PG 60.385–682).

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ABSTRACTS IN FRENCH

Magness

Les chercheurs se sont récemment interrogés sur le rôle des rabbins en Palestine durant l'Antiquité tardive, en suggérant que leur influence était moins importante qu'on ne le pensait auparavant, tandis que celle des familles sacerdotales dans la société juive d'après la chute du Temple, longtemps sous-estimée, est désormais réévaluée. Dans cet article, j'examine les catacombes de Beth Shearim, en Basse-Galilée, et la synagogue de Dura Europos pour y rechercher les traces laissées par les Juifs et les pratiques non rabbiniques, notamment celles de la présence et de l'influence des prêtres pendant le III^{ème} siècle.

Weiss

Sepphoris fut un important centre urbain de la Basse-Galilée à l'époque romaine et au début de l'époque byzantine. D'un point de vue architectural, artistique et culturel, elle n'était pas très différente des villes païennes de la Palestine antique et son exposition à la culture gréco-romaine ainsi que l'assimilation de celle-ci n'éliminèrent pas la culture juive. Dans cet article, je compare les mosaïques découvertes dans deux édifices publics construits au début du V^{ème} siècle à Sepphoris, le bâtiment du Festival du Nil et la synagogue. Elles pourraient démontrer qu'il existait des contacts étroits entre des artistes travaillant dans divers lieux et pour différentes communautés au sein de la cité. Ce phénomène souligne le caractère distinct de cette cité dans l'Antiquité tardive et offre un aperçu de la complexité des relations culturelles entre la communauté juive et d'autres groupes de la société.

Dar

On a assisté, ces dernières décennies, à un important développement de la recherche archéologique touchant à l'histoire et la culture des Samaritains en Israël durant l'Antiquité tardive. Les Samaritains,

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membres d'une secte monothéiste qui s'est séparée du judaïsme, se sont répandus depuis leur territoire originel de Samarie dans d'autres parties d'Israël. On a pu repérer leur présence grâce à des lampes à huile, des sarcophages et des synagogues, et ces indices matériels, appuyés par des sources littéraires et de nouvelles fouilles en Samarie et ailleurs, ont conduit les chercheurs à développer une meilleure compréhension de l'archéologie des Samaritains de l'Antiquité tardive.

Perrin

Au catéchumène était inculqué un véritable éthos hérésiologique visant à le prémunir contre les séductions des adversaires doctrinaux de la communauté chrétienne dans laquelle il s'apprêtait à faire son entrée: il ne s'agissait pas seulement de « fuir les hérétiques » dans l'ordre intellectuel, mais de renoncer à tout contact physique avec eux. Cette étude envisage les difficultés de la mise en œuvre d'un tel éthos au fil des controverses doctrinales des III^{ème}–V^{ème} siècles.

Gwynn

La prétendue controverse arienne qui a divisé l'Eglise au IV^{ème} siècle a fait l'objet de très nombreux débats parmi les chercheurs dans les dernières décennies. Les sources littéraires d'où nous tirons l'essentiel de nos connaissances au sujet de cette controverse sont fortement polémiques et tendancieuses, car écrites presque exclusivement du point de vue de ceux dont la position en viendrait à être considérée comme orthodoxe. Elles ont à leur tour directement influencé les interprétations des données matérielles datant de cette période cruciale de l'histoire de l'Eglise. Dans cet article, je souhaite reconsidérer ces données matérielles et m'interroger sur la manière dont une approche archéologique, indépendante des sources littéraires, pourrait enrichir notre compréhension de cette controverse et de son impact dans l'Empire romain au IV^{ème} siècle.

Ward-Perkins

Cet article étudie les traces d'un arianisme germanique dans les édifices et mosaïques exceptionnellement bien préservés de Ravenne. En dépit

des différences théologiques, l'iconographie arienne semble presque identique à celle des catholiques (par exemple, dans les représentations du Christ à S. Apollinare Nuovo et dans le baptistère arien). La différence des conceptions de Dieu le Fils n'est réellement apparente qu'à la lumière des textes. Cependant, il existe des signes matériels clairs d'un triomphalisme des catholiques après la défaite des Goths ariens, et nous ne devrions pas déduire de la similarité de l'iconographie des deux sectes qu'il n'existait pas de profondes différences de vues.

Bangert

Les pèlerinages chrétiens offrent un aperçu unique de la piété populaire dans l'Antiquité tardive. Cependant, nos sources concernant les pèlerinages, qu'elles soient littéraires ou archéologiques, sont d'une qualité et d'une quantité très variables, et la recherche moderne s'est souvent retrouvée très dépendante des données provenant de certains sites particulièrement connus, notamment le sanctuaire de Saint-Ménas à Abu Mina en Egypte. Ce site a révélé une quantité remarquable de données archéologiques concernant non seulement les bâtiments, mais aussi la production et la circulation d'une grande variété de souvenirs de pèlerinage. Il est pourtant essentiel que nous regardions au-delà du sanctuaire de Saint-Ménas pour en comparer les données avec celles qui proviennent d'autres importants lieux de pèlerinage de la Méditerranée orientale. Comme nous le verrons dans cet article, il n'existe pas de schéma simple dans l'organisation ou la production des souvenirs qui puisse être identifié par l'archéologie des pèlerinages de l'Antiquité tardive.

Schachner

Les stylites, ascètes vivant au sommet de colonnes, et leur initiateur syrien, Siméon l'Ancien (mort en 459), nous ont été rendus familiers par les textes, et ont été largement étudiés par l'historiographie. En revanche, on a accordé beaucoup moins d'attention aux données archéologiques concernant les colonnes des stylites, leur emplacement, leurs infrastructures, leurs représentations et autres données matérielles. Cet article cherche à résumer les résultats obtenus jusqu'ici par l'archéologie des stylites et propose des pistes de recherches pour poser les fondations d'une meilleure compréhension du mode de vie des

stylites, de leur fonction et leur participation à la liturgie, particulièrement pour la Syrie et la Mésopotamie.

KARIVIERI

Cet article est une introduction générale à la culture religieuse magique et syncrétique dans l'Empire romain d'Orient durant l'Antiquité tardive. L'auteur présente des exemples de rituels magiques, de textes et d'objets utilisés dans les rites. En raison des édits impériaux des IV^{ème} et V^{ème} siècles condamnant les religions païennes et le recours à la magie, ces rituels furent accomplis secrètement en privé. Les néoplatoniciens d'Athènes insistaient sur l'importance de la magie et des rites anciens comme moyens d'entrer en relation avec les dieux. Il est possible que les traces de culte attestées dans des grottes de l'Attique, durant l'Antiquité tardive, soient liées aux activités de néoplatoniciens et au syncrétisme religieux.

SFAMENI

Cet article examine les principaux problèmes liés à ce qu'on appelle les gemmes magiques (des pierres semi-précieuses où sont gravées les images de diverses divinités ou démons et caractérisées par la présence de symboles et d'inscriptions), afin de montrer ce que ce type de matériel archéologique peut apporter à notre compréhension de la magie et des croyances populaires durant l'Antiquité tardive. Les gemmes magiques sont le reflet d'une idéologie complexe, étroitement liée aux pratiques rituelles que l'on accomplissait pour atteindre divers objectifs tels que la divination, la protection contre les dangers, la santé, l'amour, le succès ou la richesse. On cherchait à atteindre ces objectifs en invoquant un pouvoir surhumain, par l'intermédiaire des images et des formules inscrites sur les gemmes. En raison de la complexité des problèmes soulevés par ce type de matériel archéologique, il est nécessaire de limiter la discussion à l'analyse de quelques exemples pertinents choisis parmi les données disponibles.

Lepelley

Les attitudes que nourrissaient les chrétiens cultivés envers la culture littéraire païenne de l'Antiquité tardive font depuis longtemps l'objet d'un débat parmi les chercheurs. Jérôme et Augustin expriment le malaise que de nombreux hommes de lettres chrétiens ressentaient, tandis que les apologistes chrétiens n'ont eu de cesse d'attaquer l'absurdité et l'immoralité de la mythologie païenne. Pourtant, Jérôme et Augustin croyaient tous deux que la culture classique pouvait contribuer à la vie chrétienne, et la mythologie est demeurée une source d'inspiration pour certains auteurs chrétiens. On en trouve la preuve manifeste dans les écrits de deux figures importantes de l'Antiquité tardive, Sidoine Apollinaire, dans la Gaule du V^{ème} siècle, et Corippe, poète africain du VI^{ème} siècle. Dans leurs œuvres, on peut retracer une acceptation progressive de la mythologie classique comme héritage culturel plutôt que religieux, qui conduira, plus tard, à l'humanisme chrétien de la Renaissance.

Humphries (et Gwynn)

On conçoit souvent l'impact du christianisme sur la société profane durant l'Antiquité tardive en termes négatifs, dans la mesure où l'on considère que divers éléments caractéristiques de l'Antiquité classique disparaissent. Dans ce cadre interprétatif, la majorité des études de la littérature de l'Antiquité tardive se sont concentrées sur la survie des traditions et des thèmes « classiques » (ou « païens », ou encore « profanes ») dans les écrits chrétiens. Cet article examine la question du point de vue opposé. Il propose de montrer comment les discours chrétiens ont pénétré de différentes manières des écrits dont le contenu n'était à l'origine pas religieux, dans l'Occident latin du IV^{ème} au VI^{ème} siècle.

Jeffreys

Jean Malalas, auteur d'une chronique chrétienne compilée initialement vers 532 et complétée vers 565, ne montre qu'un intérêt limité pour les éléments chrétiens du monde qui l'entourait: il mentionne des

aspects de la bureaucratie ecclésiastique tels que les conciles, l'élection ou la déposition des patriarches. Il se montre beaucoup plus intéressé par des rites et des croyances qui ne sont qu'à peine chrétiens, comme le montrent ses références aux « *mystikoi* » et ses préoccupations millénaristes.

SANDWELL

Dans cet article, l'auteur cherche à étudier la question de l'apathie religieuse durant le IV^{ème} siècle à travers les écrits de Jean Chrysostome et de Libanios. Il s'intéresse tout d'abord aux accusations de laxisme religieux adressées par Chrysostome à son auditoire et à l'image que les écrits de Chrysostome donnent de l'attitude de son public envers la religion. Il examine ensuite de manière plus large la place donnée à la religion au IV^{ème} siècle en explorant les écrits de Libanios sur ce sujet. En prenant en compte cette perspective plus globale, l'auteur suggère que Chrysostome se montre injuste lorsqu'il accuse ses auditeurs de laxisme religieux et qu'en réalité, il apparaît que ceux-ci sont en désaccord avec lui sur l'étendue de l'emprise que la religion devrait avoir sur leur vie.

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ERRATUM

Erratum for LAA 5 *Objects in Context, Objects in Use*
Eds. L. Lavan, E. Swift and T. Putzeys (Leiden 2007)

In the article "Material spatiality in late antiquity: sources, approaches and field methods" by L. Lavan, E. Swift and T. Putzeys, the authorship of the article was split into three sections, marked by initials, which were accidentally removed during typesetting. The correct author accreditation is as follows: LL 1–17, ES 17–27, TP 27–37.

D. Gwynn, S. Bangert (edd.) *Religious Diversity in Late Antiquity*
(Late Antique Archaeology 6 – 2008) (Leiden 2010), p. 563

LATE ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

Series Editor

LUKE LAVAN

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